

WOW

words on the web

*77 writing tips to make over
your online content*

Elizabeth Campbell





Word styling (v): To take boring, unreadable, valueless content, give it a makeover and turn it into WOW words that create WOW moments.
Usually performed by a word stylist (n).

WOW Words on the Web

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Testimonials

“Content is the lifeblood of any good online presence with so many websites invisible in the eyes of Google. Elizabeth has distilled what it takes to build great blog and social content. Most importantly, she focuses on how to style this so that it stands out and converts. This is the ‘go-to’ book for content on the web.”

Jon Hollenberg – author, *Love at First Site*

“If you want to stand out from the crowd, you need “WOW”. *Wow - Words on the Web* will become your writing bible. By far the best book I have read on content writing for the online world.”

Adam Houlahan – author, *Social Media Secret Sauce*

“This world of blogging was a mystery to me. I was constantly being told I should do it – but how? Along came Liz Campbell’s book and in an easy-to-read, totally informative and supportive method I wrote my first blog and then some more and then some more. You are right Liz - Where would we be without words!”

Elizabeth Gillam – author, *Upsize Your Profit*

“*Wow - Words on the Web* is a must read for small business owners who don’t know where to start when it comes to writing their web content. It will teach you how to stand out from your competition and engage your desired audience so you can boost your bottom line. Liz’s approach is easy to understand and implement.”

Abbey Dalgleish – co-owner and co-author, *Makeup Media Marketing*

Acknowledgements

Wow. Writing a book is an arduous, yet rewarding, experience and just as it takes a village to raise a child, many people had a hand in making this happen.

I have to say, while there were many ups and downs, tears and laughter, late nights and early mornings, I have loved every minute of the book-writing process and I'm extremely happy to have the support of what feels like a village of people who were ready and waiting in the wings with constructive feedback, great advice, sound-boarding capabilities, and an ear for me to chew whenever I was unclear and in the fog, and whenever I had a little win.

I think by the time I was a few weeks deep everyone knew I was writing a book except for my Dad, whom I allegedly didn't tell. I beg to differ, Your Honour!

I'm so grateful to have been surrounded by such amazing people throughout the process. And, with that, I would like to thank my family, friends, associates, and acquaintances for their time, help, patience, and love; especially those who I have referred to in this book.

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And to you: You, sitting there, reading this book. Writing is the reason I get up in the morning and I feel honoured to have shared my best knowledge with you. You will probably never know just how big a part you played in getting this book off the ground, and for that I'm eternally grateful. Thank you a million times.

Liz x





***The Big Introduction
and Getting Ready***



Word Styling

Words, I'd like you to meet *Style*. *Style*, this is *Words*. Everything you're about to learn in this book, I call "word styling". It's more than just writing, it's more than content, it's more than the pair combined. It is about adding WOW factor and standing out. This is how you write web words that rock and get results.

Word styling (v): To take boring, unreadable, valueless content, give it a makeover and turn it into WOW words that create WOW moments. Usually performed by a word stylist (n).

WOW (adj): The word someone says when they read your online content. Often achieved by word styling (v).

So please, grab a notebook and pen or iPad, laptop or whatever your content-writing method is, and take notes wherever you need to. This book is designed for you to put down and pick up as often as you like. Oh, and you won't find those definitions above in any dictionary. They are from *The Book of Liz*. I made them up.

Let's go!

Where would we be without words?

We all create words. We blend them, shorten them and compound them to make up hundreds of languages all over the world.

Where would we be without them?

When I posted this question on my Facebook page, one liker said – “back in the dark ages with the cavemen.” I thought this was pretty spot on.

When we aren’t creating words, we’re speaking them. When we’re not speaking them, we’re listening to other people’s words; through books, conversations, songs on the radio, movies, theatre, television or DVDs.

Words – used correctly – express information, information creates knowledge, and knowledge creates power. Just take a look at the vast amounts of propaganda used in any war – propaganda is created using words; people reading, hearing and speaking those words creates knowledge around a campaign; and as that knowledge grows, so too does the power of the government behind the propaganda. Think of the US government’s Uncle Sam in World War II. The poster is extremely famous and sports only three little words: “We Want You.” Simple and effective.

I only have to mention the words “I have a dream” and instantly you will know who said them: Martin Luther King.

People are remembered for their words:

“For beautiful eyes, look for the good in others; for beautiful lips, speak only words of kindness; and for poise, walk with the knowledge that you are never alone.” – Audrey Hepburn.

We also remember the stories they tell, the speeches they make, their one-liners and their quotes:

“And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country.” – John F Kennedy.

Words that date back centuries become legacies:

“Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow, that I shall say good night ‘til it be morrow.” – William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet.

We may not remember the name of the person who said it or the name of the film, but we remember the words:

“I know what you’re thinking, punk. You’re thinking ‘did he fire six shots or only five?’ Now to tell you the truth I forgot myself in all this excitement. But being this is a .44 Magnum, the most powerful handgun in the world and will blow your head clean off, you’ve gotta ask yourself a question: ‘Do I feel lucky?’ Well, do ya, punk?” – Clint Eastwood as Harry Callahan in *Dirty Harry*.

They connect us, help us grieve, make us laugh, make us cry, teach us things we never knew existed... they are a pretty powerful tool, don’t you think?

Words are a way to express ourselves as individuals. They tell our story.

Now think about your business for a moment. What if your business didn’t have a voice? What if it couldn’t speak?

Words are everything. But it's how we use the right words – and use them wisely – that makes all the difference.

The words on your website or blog are no different. You can use them to engage, educate and entertain. They can spark conversations, provide answers and invoke thoughts and feelings.

Words inspire and motivate. They encourage, support and move people.

Right now there's a huge emphasis on super high-quality content and, coupled with small businesses taking over the world, there has never been a better time to bring your words to life, share messages, produce meaning and build a connection.

Remember just how powerful words have been throughout history and how they have been used to create meaning, tell stories, epitomise emotions, explain, describe, educate and sell. Now use that to your advantage.

Let's use WOW words to create WOW moments.

When you put all of these words together...

You get content! Big, bold and beautiful content.

You may have heard the saying “content is king” – it's a bit overused, but it is right. Let's say content is the star of the show. All you have to do is look at a newspaper, your favourite blog or website or glossy magazine. Do you buy it for the ads? Probably not. I know I don't. You read it for the content, right? The WOW words?

This is why your very own online content must be compelling, creative, credible, high quality, newsworthy, and helpful because, ultimately, it will attract the right

customers, hold their attention and keep them coming back for more.

So what is content?

“Content” is just about anything these days, including the words on your website, blogs, online stories, articles and profiles, eBooks and online manuals, e-zines, press releases, newsletters, social media status updates, videos, webinars, podcasts and any other way you choose to get your editorial message out to the world. Predominantly, it’s words, pictures, video and audio – any consumable information that’s shareable. Content writing generally refers to the writing of all of these methods.

But what is WOW content?

As I’m sure you know, not all content is good. In fact, some of it’s pretty awful. I’m sure you’ve had a moment when you just wanted a quick, reliable answer to a question and could only find websites that were all fluff, puff and guff; that danced around the topic and gave you a taste of what you were looking for but didn’t give specifics; or had the information you were looking for just not in a readable format. Basically, it was of no help and you just wasted who knows how long in front of the computer and you still didn’t have the answer. Talk about frustrating!

Anyone can create a website, write a blog post, film a video on their phone or update their Facebook status, but it takes *great* content to make you stand out. You know what

I mean – when a string of words comes together that is amazing, beautiful and powerful, all wrapped up into one ball of WOW.

This is the content that is helpful, targeted and stays with you. A mere group of characters can help you stand out, generate leads and boost your business. It can be an influential tool that your readers can relate to and use. Quality content can be achieved by small business owners from all walks of life, and this book will show you how to do that.

When did content get so important?

Never before has there been such an emphasis on content – quality content. And, believe it or not, Google is largely responsible.

Google changes its algorithm frequently and every change puts a greater focus on quality content. This is true now more than ever because users have changed the way they use “search”.

They aren’t just looking for one keyword or phrase; they are looking up a string of words. For example:

How do I bake a red velvet cheesecake?

How do I write website content that converts?

Can I be like MacGyver and use a piece of duct tape and a paperclip to jumpstart my car?

Maybe not that last one.

This is a step in the direction of conversational search and these examples above show you how our searches

have changed. The questions that people are asking, or the specific phrases they are typing, are the questions you should be answering in your content.

For example, a blog post might read: “So you’ve been looking for the perfect recipe on how to bake a red velvet cheesecake? Well then, you’re in the right place.”

This becomes quality information that readers are searching for and is a valuable way to optimise your content.

These changes to the algorithm focus on making your visitors happy first and foremost. Google is encouraging people to give useful information – something you will see a lot about in this book. It’s about giving away your valuable knowledge to your readers to build trust and rapport. Your website or blog will become their go-to place for information and education.

For a long time there has been an emphasis on providing useful, high-quality content on websites and blogs and using keyword phrases instead of one-word searches. The most important thing to remember is that many of the same rules apply, there’s just a bigger emphasis on creating unique content.

There’s so much content out there, how will I stand out?

Say what?

OK, yes, you’re right. There is a lot of content out there in the big, wide world of the web. But, guess what? There’s only one *you* with all your knowledge, personality, experience and stories.

You, my friend, are fabulous and you have something different to offer cyberspace. Wouldn't you agree? Wouldn't you say you had an utterly different approach to that of your competition with all those unique thoughts, ideas, beliefs and opinions swimming around in your head? That's what I thought!

So how do you stand out from the crowd, get your message out there and create content that sparks conversation, generates leads and boosts your business?

The only authentic way to shine is to produce consistently great content that's reliable and engaging, complete with credible facts and sources. In essence, WOW words.

How do you WOW your readers?

I have simplified the writing process into five steps: *Strategy*, *Soul and Substance*, *Structure*, *Style* and *SEO*.

1. Strategy

The best content doesn't happen by chance – there's a strategy behind it. Here you'll learn how to create your online content writing strategy, including figuring out exactly what you want your content to do for your business, committing to producing regular content and learning how to measure what works and what doesn't.

2. Soul and Substance

Now, what to write about? You'll learn the best ways to gather ideas so you can write to your heart's content.

Writing content every week will be easier with these in hand. Just think about what's happening in your industry. Any news? What about within your company? You can even pull content together about something funny that happened to you today.

3. **Structure**

Once you have a list of ideas, you need to write them in a way that keeps your readers wanting more, so they move from the headline to your first paragraph, from that paragraph to the next, all the way to your call to action.

4. **Style**

This is what makes your content sound like *you*. This is how you stand out. Here you'll find your unique writing voice, as well as big no-nos to avoid, and even how to bring your spelling, grammar and punctuation up to scratch.

5. **SEO**

Of course, because we're online, we can't forget about Google, or should I say the search engines. This chapter will show you how to make all of your new and existing content search-engine friendly, while still giving your readers exactly what they crave.

This book solves three main problems small business owners face

The reason I've written this book is because I believe everyone can look good online through the power and beauty of words, aka word styling.

After working with – and writing content for - thousands of small businesses throughout my career as a journalist and an entrepreneur, when it comes to the content catwalk, I notice many people are able to style their business offline, but aren't styling it online. They can't seem to find the right words. This leads to three common problems:

1. Business owners are overwhelmed and don't know where to start.
2. They have a poor online presence.
3. Few online leads.

This is caused by the belief they can't write and lack of knowledge (the how-to).

I believe everyone can write and you can understand it – if you know how. It's just the "how-to" that's getting in your way.

Some business owners don't understand why having an online presence is important.

Let me explain – there is this massive wave that everyone is riding at the moment and it's called content marketing, aka what I call the content catwalk. Google's algorithms are becoming more focused on quality content, which means that the words in your blogs, online articles and websites have never been more important. If you get left behind

in the wash of this wave, you are doing your business a disservice. There is no reason why small businesses can't look good online through the power and beauty of words they have written themselves.

Hmmm, there's a blog post in that.

This book will teach you how to optimise your content so that it works for Google and the other search engines, while still giving your readers what they want and need.

I believe in you – I know you can do it

Many people have told me they *can't* write, which is different to “don't like” or “don't want to”. If you don't like or don't want to do it, then you shouldn't because you won't enjoy it and your time will be better spent elsewhere, right?

If you think you *can't* write, I put this down to not having the content writing skills to get the results you want online. For some people, writing is the biggest hassle, just like numbers are for me. I can't stand any sort of maths. Urgh. Gosh, it gives me grief. I find it a complete challenge. But as a business owner, I have to know where my numbers are. And if I'm really honest with myself – numbers are the universal language, aren't they? They run the world.

This book will not only show you that you *can* write, but you'll also discover that you have plenty to write about. I know there's a story inside you just waiting to bust out. This was one of the very first things I learned as a journalist.

My first job as a journalist was at a country newspaper. It was great – I learned so much about my chosen craft and

how the world of newspapers worked, albeit on a smaller scale, which gave me insight into every facet of how a publication was “put to bed.”

I met and interviewed countless celebs, politicians, sports people and TV personalities, but it was the stories about everyday people that really captured my attention. There were tales of love, war, devastation, happiness, sorrow, and a few had been famous in their time too.

These people would mention something in passing that would usually prick my ears and I couldn't help but investigate, asking question after question as they replied, “Oh you don't want to write a story on me, love, what have I got to say?” These were the ones who often made the front page.

It's all very well for me to say that everyone has a story to tell, but it's a different picture when you have to write it yourself. Even I have found it hard to write about myself, and still do sometimes. But everyone *can* write.

Tip

The best thing you can do is to just sit down and write. Don't worry about the spelling, grammar and punctuation (yet); just write. Get it all out and then massage and polish it – and send it to a great proofreader.

There's plenty of inspiration around you right now – just look to your friends, family and childhood memories, plus stories from your clients, team, colleagues and mentors. There's a story there just waiting to be integrated into your business blog, I guarantee it!

About the rest of this book

Woo hoo! We've just about covered the introduction, which gives you an insight into content writing and getting started.

In Part 1, I'm going to teach you the skills to writing WOW words on the web, planning your content to save time, and gaining a better understanding of the online world of content with a bunch of tips throughout the five simple steps: *Strategy, Soul and Substance, Structure, Style* and *SEO*.

Then, in Part 2, we'll go deep into the heart of your online content and I'll show you exactly how to write for your website, your blog and social media platforms. After learning the first five steps, this is where we get specific, with more tips, templates and examples so you never get stuck.

And the tips and word style steps?

All the answers, helpful hints and important information are in this book. There is no Googling separate topics and subjects. This book covers it all. Consider it the word styling bible of online content writing.

This book has been designed for all levels of word stylists, whether you are a beginner or just in need of a refresh. If you feel you know the theoretic stuff in Part 1 please feel free to skip over to Part 2, glancing back at the "5 Ss" if you need to. If this is all relatively new to you, I suggest just taking your time and reading Part 1 before you

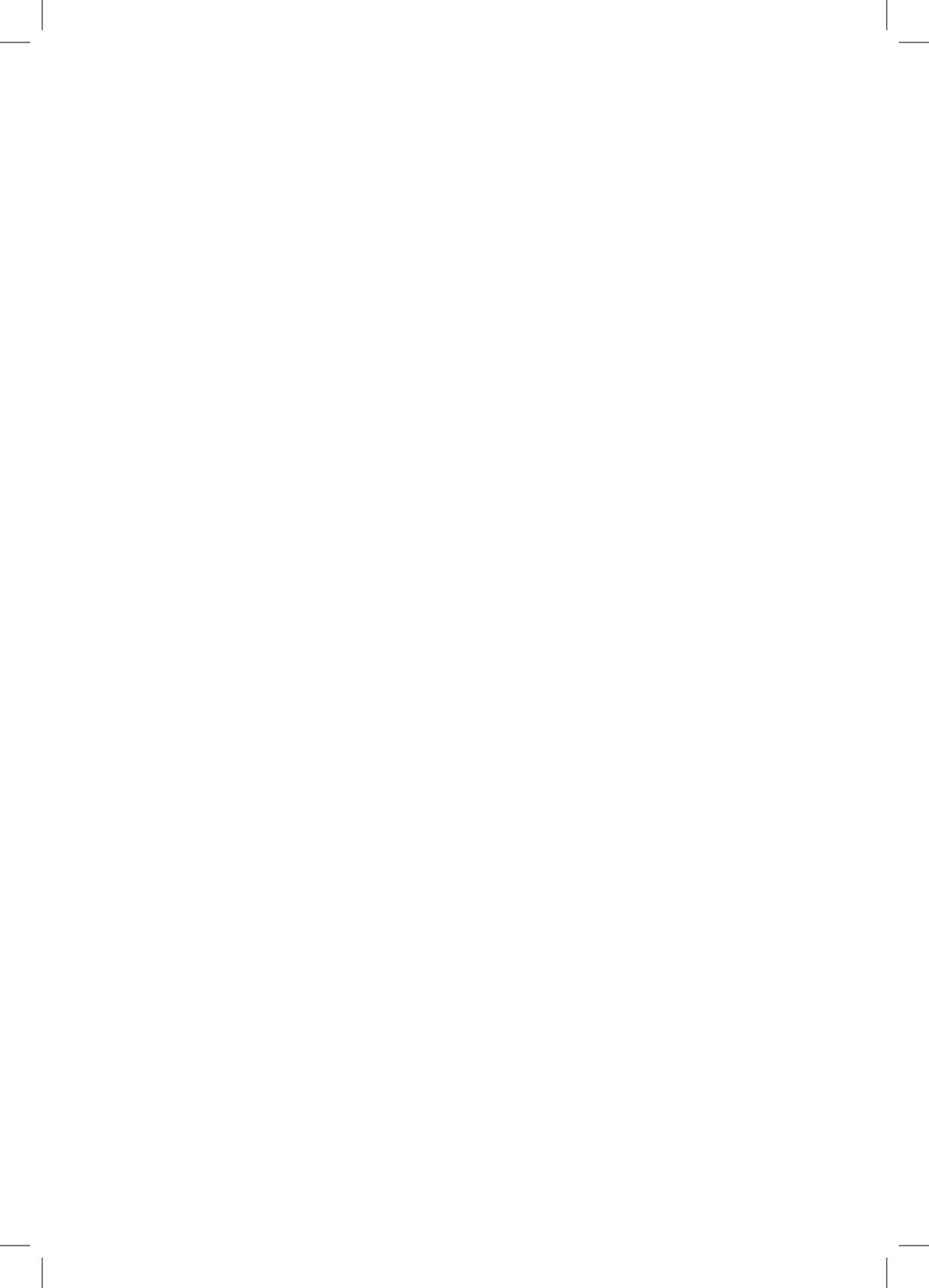
leap into the party that is Part 2. Creating the right words is not a race, it takes time – and so should you.

There are tips in every chapter so you can open to any page and immediately put one into practice. The word style steps are also there to keep you accountable so you can actually stop reading and start doing. This is the best way of learning.

Why 77 tips, not 89 or 62 or 150? Well, I'll leave that story until the end, so you'll have to just read on.

PART 1

The Content Catwalk
Behind the Scenes



1

Strategy

“While their competition is asleep, world-class leaders are up – and they’re not watching the news or reading the paper. They are thinking, planning and practising.” – ROBIN S SHARMA

Just like the best leaders, the best content doesn’t just happen by chance – it gets *planned*. There’s a strategy behind it. *Now* is the best time to get your writing goals in order, to commit to generating regular content and to set up a system so you can measure your progress.

This is how you will make your content writing work with ease and efficiency.

Get goal setting, gorgeous

Setting clear goals for what you want your content writing to achieve is the pinnacle of a high-performing