



# THE ABCS OF PERSUASIVE COPY

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If you write ads, email, direct mail, landing pages, web copy, content or just about anything that needs to prompt action, you know how critical your copy can be.

The words you choose, and the order in which you use them, can make all the difference.

So take advantage of these 26 words and copy constructs that have been proven to trigger behavior — and watch your read and response rates soar.



### **A is for the Authority Principle**

People trust and obey what authorities say, so use them.



### **B is for Because**

This compliance trigger word gets people nodding yes before they even read what comes next.



### **C is for Commitment and Consistency**

Make your first yes lead to subsequent ones. Gradually increase your asks.



### **D is for Deals**

Remember to minimize the pain of paying.



### **E is for Eye Magnet Words**

Put these words proven to attract the human eye in high-read pieces of real estate.



### **F is for Framing**

The way you phrase something influences how people perceive and respond to it.



### **G is for Guarantee**

This word removes risk and makes people feel confident about buying.



### **H is for Herd Mentality**

When uncertain of what decision to make, people will follow others — especially others like themselves.



### **I is for Information Gap Theory**

If there's a gap between what people know and what they want to know, they'll take action to close that gap.



### **J is for Jargon**

Don't use a 75¢ word when a 25¢ word will do.



### **K is for Knowledge**

People will predict the likelihood of something happening based on how readily they can recall a relevant example.



### **L is for Loss Aversion**

People are twice as motivated to avoid pain as they are to achieve pleasure.



### **M is for Mental Energy**

Don't make people expend a lot of it when they read what you've written. Keep it simple.



### **N is for New**

The human brain craves the new and novel, so use the words new, now, introducing, announcing, finally and soon.



### **O is for Overcoming Objections**

To persuade people to do something, you first have to identify and overcome the reservations they have.



### **P is for Personalization**

People are drawn to their own names.



### **Q is for Questions**

Studies show questions are 140-150% more engaging than declarative sentences.



### **R is for Rational and Emotional**

People make decisions for emotional reasons and then justify them with rational reasons. Include both in your copy.



### **S is for Storytelling**

Stories make people understand information better and retain it longer.



### **T is for Time**

You spend more time writing something than people do reading it, so make your copy easy to absorb.



### **U is for Urgency**

When an item's in limited supply, people place greater value on it.



### **V is for the Von Restorff Effect**

The human brain is hardwired to notice things that stand out.



### **W is for Wordplay**

Certain literary devices, such as rhyme and simile, will capture attention and increase comprehension.



### **X is for the X Factor**

Visuals can make your copy more credible.



### **Y is for You**

Because people are most interested in themselves, you is one of the most powerful words in the English language.



### **Z is for the Zeigarnik Effect**

Once we start something, we feel compelled to finish it.

For more information, contact **Nancy Harhut** today at [nharhut@hbtmktg.com](mailto:nharhut@hbtmktg.com)

