Letting Go of the Words – Writing Great Copy

Janice (Ginny) Redish
Redish & Associates, Inc.
Bethesda, MD USA
www.redish.net
@GinnyRedish

London
March 2013
Content Strategy = Governance, resources

and, especially, = cross-group collaboration
Content Strategy = Messages and more

Messages
Media
Tones
Styles

Right content in the right amount to the right person at the right time in the right medium
Content is everything you say in all the ways you touch people

- text
- illustrations
- charts
- graphs
- tables
- forms
- videos
- podcasts
- blogs
- emails
- social media
- paper mailings
- and more
Why focus on content?

Useful, usable navigation and search are critical.

Good, clear design is critical.

Technology that works is critical.

But they all support the content that people come for.
Content = Conversation
Online, your site visitor / app user starts the conversation

You start the conversation

He starts the conversation

Flickr cc photo by Bradleyolin
Thanks to Caroline Jarrett for finding the example for me.

Jenna enjoying red wine at a friend's house.

Next moment after this picture – Oops!
RED WINE STAIN REMOVAL

We have all experienced a spillage on our clothes or car from a glass of red wine. Red wine spillages can spoil a dinner party or embarrass you at a networking event. We don't think red wine spillages should be an issue for anyone; with Vanish Oxi Action you can be assured getting rid of red wine stains will be easy.
HOW TO REMOVE RED WINE STAINS

To get those nasty red wine stains out, we recommend using Vanish Oxi Action Powder:

Vanish Oxi Action Powder

Soaking is recommended in this case - dissolve one scoop of Vanish Oxi Action Powder in 4L of warm water (max 40°) and soak the stained item. For coloured fabrics, soak for max 1 hour.

Best results add one scoop of Vanish to your wash.

Important: Always follow the usage instructions on the Vanish packaging. Do not use on wool, silk or leather. Do not use on finished or coated surfaces – for example wood, metals etc.

For more tips, click the titles below:

RED WINE STAIN REMOVAL TIPS
Removing Red Wine Stains

Vanish Oxi Action Powder removes wine stains easily.

**Important**: Follow the package directions.
Do **not** use on wool, silk, or leather.
Do **not** use on wood, metals, or other finished or coated surfaces.

**Instructions**
1. Dissolve 1 scoop of Vanish Oxi Action Powder in 4 litres of warm water. (warm = max. 40°)
2. Soak the stained item.
   - Colored item – soak max. 1 hour
   - White item – soak max. 6 hours
3. Wash as usual, adding 1 scoop of Vanish to the wash.
Content = Conversation = Letting go of the words

- Big screen / mid screen / small screen
- Content everywhere
- One person, many devices
- Some people only mobile, only tablet
- All types of conversations are happening on all types of devices
Content = Conversation helps you

- plan
- organize
- write
- evaluate

Flickr cc photo by Polandeze
Content = Conversation
helps you

- plan
- organize
- write
- evaluate
Plan at every level

- **Why?** (Purposes)
- **Who?** (Personas)
- **What?** (Conversations)

A very brief creative brief for every piece of copy
Why? Purposes

- Aligned with business goals and content strategy
- Measurable
- Specific
- Focused on your customers

£ → ££

€€ € → €
Focus on what you want people to do because you wrote this copy

We want

- to sell lots of shoes
- people to buy the shoes we sell
- to tell people how to get their driving licence
- people to get their driving licence successfully without frustration and without calling with questions
Make an Appointment

To make an appointment with a provider based at Harborview Medical Center, call 206.520.5000 or toll-free 1.877.520.5000, 7 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. weekdays and Saturdays, and 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Sundays.

To make an appointment with a provider based at UW Medical Center or at any of our seven UW Medicine Neighborhood Clinics, call toll-free 1.877.520.5000, 7 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. weekdays and Saturdays, and 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Sundays.

We can schedule an outpatient appointment for you with physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants at Harborview Medical Center, UW Medical Center, including its clinics at Roosevelt and the Eastside Specialty Center, as well as our Seattle-area UW Medicine Neighborhood Clinics in Belltown, Factoria, Federal Way, Issaquah, Kent/Des Moines, Shoreline and Woodinville.

The UW Medicine Neighborhood Clinics are often able to offer same-day or short-notice appointments. Appointments can be made by calling the UW Medicine Neighborhood Clinic where you would like to be seen.
Who? Personas

- Who they are

- Adjectives and phrases to describe
  - Abilities
  - Aptitudes
  - Attitudes

Even assumptive personas can help you focus on the people your copy is for.
What? Conversations
Make an Appointment
with a doctor, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant

Need to be seen today?
Call the UW Medicine Neighborhood Clinic
where you would like to be seen.

Need an appointment
for another day?
Call us.

Monday - Saturday 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Sunday 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

206-520-5000 or
toll-free 1-877-520-5000

for appointments at
Harborview Medical Center
UW Medical Center (including Roosevelt Clinic and Eastside Specialty Center)
UW Medicine Neighborhood Clinics (Belltown, Factoria, Federal Way, Issaquah,
Kent/DesMoines, Shoreline, Woodinville)
Make an Appointment

The Contact Center is here to help!

Call 1.877.520.5000 toll free or 206.520.5000 in the Seattle area!
The UW Medicine Contact Center allows you one central place to take care of many of your needs. This allows your healthcare providers and their support staff to focus on you during your visit.

We provide service outside of regular clinic operation hours, so you can connect with us at your convenience, including on evenings and week-ends.

Hours:
Monday - Saturday: 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Sunday: 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

We currently provide support for most outpatient clinics at:

- University of Washington Medical Center
- Harborview Medical Center
- UW Neighborhood Clinics

We can help you:

- Make, cancel, reschedule and confirm appointments.
- Update your insurance and personal information.
- Find directions, hours of operations, and fax numbers.
- Register for eCare online services.

http://www.uwmedicine.org/Patient-Care/Our-Services/Pages/Make-An-Appointment.aspx
Content = Conversation helps you

- plan
- organize
- write
- evaluate
Cut to the essential message – and put it first

"Bite, snack, meal" from Leslie O'Flahavan, [www.ewriteonline.com](http://www.ewriteonline.com).

Bite

Snack

Meal
Break up text with parallel, useful headings

### Licence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of licence</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First provisional - car, motorcycle, moped</td>
<td>£50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First full GB licence in exchange for a full European Community/European Economic Area or other designated foreign licence</td>
<td>£50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Replacing a driving licence

This will cost £20. You must replace your licence if it’s been lost, stolen, defaced or destroyed.

#### Changing the name or address on your driving licence

There’s no charge for this service. If you’re a photocard licence holder and want to change your photo at the same time, your licence will be renewed, with a

### Renewing a driving licence

Photocard licences are only valid for up to 10 years, although you’re normally entitled to drive until your 70th birthday. You must renew your photo every 10 years - you’ll receive a reminder to do this before your current licence ends.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for renewal</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From age 70</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For medical reasons</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus or lorry drivers</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After disqualification</td>
<td>£65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)
Hear the conversation as you design and write

I like that bag, but I wonder…

© iStockphoto

www.ebags.com

© 2013, Janice (Ginny) Redish  Confab London  Slide 27
Talk to (and with) your customers

In the presentation, this slide had a visual with two versions of the lead-in to a form:
- a noun-based description, followed by a call to action
- a conversational phrase as if the site visitor were speaking

The conversational phrase generated many more leads and sales.

https://whichtestwon.com/archives/19429
with permission to show but not to distribute
Give your customers a voice

In the presentation, this slide had a visual with two versions of a call-to-action button.

One button used "my."
The other used "your."

"My" generated many more clicks.

https://whichtestwon.com/archives/20134
with permission to show but not to distribute
Let go of the words – but, sometimes, add words the conversation needs

www.virb.com
Example from Josh Porter
http://bokardo.com

Forms as relationship, conversation, appearance
Jarrett and Gaffney, *Forms that Work*, Morgan Kaufmann / Elsevier, 2009
Content = Conversation helps you

- plan
- organize
- write
- evaluate
Walk your personas through their conversations

- Do usability testing!

- Even before that: "channel" your personas as they bring their conversations to your content.
Thank you!

Ginny Redish

www.redish.net

More questions?
Write to me:

ginny@redish.net

Morgan Kaufmann / Elsevier
2nd edition, 2012