SAMPLE CHAPTERS

Copywriting That Sells

HIGH TECH

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO WRITING

POWERFUL PROMOTIONAL

MATERIALS FOR TECHNOLOGY

PRODUCTS, SERVICES, AND COMPANIES.

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JANICE M. KING

Book Excerpt: *Copywriting That Sells High Tech*

This document contains sample chapters and other material excerpted from the book *Copywriting That Sells High Tech: The definitive guide to writing powerful promotional materials for technology products, services, and companies* by Janice M. King. All content in this document and in the book is Copyright©2006 by Janice M. King. All rights reserved.

To learn more about the book or to order a copy, visit the companion Web site: *www.writinghightech.com.*

About the Book

For writers, marketers, and PR professionals ... the book you'll use every day.

Writing effective promotional materials for high-tech products, services, and companies is decidedly different from pitching general business or consumer products.

It requires unique knowledge and skills to successfully translate rarefied technical jargon and sophisticated concepts into effective, high-impact sales copy.

Written by noted high-tech copywriter Janice King, *Copywriting That Sells High Tech* is both a superb tutorial for novices and **an indispensable working reference** for experienced communicators. This book will give you:

> *Valuable insights and practical advice* on writing clear, compelling marketing and public relations materials for high-tech products and services

> *Proven techniques* that will improve the copy in all the materials you write, whether print or online

> *Hundreds of ideas* you can use everyday for brochures, direct mail packages, press releases, Web content, email, and more

> *Vital information* on brand communication for your product and company and how to adapt your materials to the growing international marketplace

Each chapter includes **extensive examples** and references to recommended reading and Web sites, making this book an ideal tool for self-study or for course adoption in a college-level writing or marketing class.

Janice M. King is an award-winning copywriter based near Seattle, Washington whose clients include leading technology companies across the United States. Her insights are drawn from more than 20 years of experience as a writer and marketing manager in high technology.

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Part 3: High-Tech Marcom Projects

INTRODUCTION

Copywriting That Sells High Tech is for anyone who develops marketing or press materials (printed or online) for a technology product, service, or company. It is a practical guide to the promotional content, materials, and writing techniques that are successful in today's high-tech marketplace.

I wrote this book because it is an everyday resource that I needed—but could not find—for my work as a freelance copywriter for a variety of high-tech companies. While there are many general books on copywriting techniques, advertising, and public relations, I found their information to be of limited value in the context of marketing communication (marcom) for technology. As an example, finding good ways to handle technical jargon is an issue that simply doesn't exist in the marketing of general business or consumer products. In addition, for most high-tech marketing writers, advertisements and press releases are only a small portion of their work; a greater portion is sales brochures, white papers, articles, and Web content.

Unlike the general books, *Copywriting That Sells High Tech* focuses exclusively on the marcom materials commonly produced by technology companies. This book is a comprehensive reference of ideas and techniques for all high-tech marcom and public relations materials.

Unless stated otherwise, the information presented here applies equally to printed materials and content delivered on the Web or other electronic medium. The examples presented and issues described in this book are drawn from a range of high-tech industries,

including computer hardware and software, telecommunications, networking, and electronics. Although some of the referenced products and companies no longer exist, these examples show that the principles of good writing remain the same over time.

WHO SHOULD READ THIS BOOK

This book will be of interest to several groups of readers, including:

Corporate Copywriters and Communication Specialists. Writers, specialists, editors, and managers in marketing communication and public relations groups. Also, technical writers and editors in documentation groups who produce marketing materials. Whether you address the full range of marcom projects or only a certain type of material, this book will give you practical ideas to improve your writing for every project.

Corporate Marketing Managers. Product and marketing managers who provide input for, review, and approve marketing plans and materials. This book will help you recognize and obtain effective marketing and public relations materials.

Advertising Agency Staff, Freelancers, and Consultants. Copywriters, creative directors, public relations specialists, and account executives in advertising, marketing, and public relations agencies. Also, freelance copywriters and marcom consultants. As an agency-based or independent communicator, you must offer special skills and expertise to your clients for a wide range of materials. Clients also have higher expectations for the quality and creativity of agency or freelance work. This book will give you a useful everyday reference for generating new ideas and maintaining the freshness and high quality of your work. And if you are new to high-tech products, this book will provide a valuable education in the unique issues and challenges of these markets.

Students. College-level students in business communication, marketing, advertising, public relations, and technical communication programs. This book will give you information about the specific writing techniques and project types you will be expected to produce on the job.

While this book was written from an American perspective, I hope that communicators in other countries and cultures will find relevant ideas and techniques. Perhaps you will also gain a better understanding of how U.S. technology companies develop their marketing and public relations materials.

HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM THIS BOOK

You don't need to read the chapters sequentially, or even the entire book. The content is organized so you can quickly find the most relevant section for a current project or information need. However, you should read Chapters 5 through 7 together as they present a complete, integrated approach to the actual craft of marketing writing. As time allows, read the other chapters—they present useful information to add to your framework of marcom knowledge.

As you read, go online to find examples of materials that reflect the principles and guidelines in this book. Look for examples in the materials from your own company, from competitors, even for non-technical products. Keep a file of samples that are especially appealing, and learn from their application of design and writing techniques. You'll also find useful resources at the Web site for this book: **writinghightech.com.**

Use this book every day to gain ideas for specific materials, to expand your knowledge into new areas, and to find resources for detailed exploration of a topic. The information presented here assumes you have a solid knowledge of the rules of grammar and basic writing techniques, such as constructing a coherent sentence and making a logical flow between paragraphs. This book does not cover:

- General writing skills or issues around the practice of writing such as how to conduct research and interviews or how to develop good work habits.
- Materials that are usually classified as general business communication including procedures, employee communication, community relations, and investor relations.

For the purpose of this book, these definitions apply:

Marketing Communication. An umbrella term (often abbreviated to "marcom" in this book) that encompasses all sales, advertising, press materials, and other documents intended to promote the sale of a product.

Advertising. Paid marketing messages for a product or company that appear in a magazine, newspaper, online, or broadcast medium.

Press Materials. Informational documents that are targeted primarily to journalists and analysts, such as press releases, fact sheets, and backgrounders.

Product. The ideas and techniques presented in this book apply to the marketing of technical services as well as products. As used here, the term product includes services, except where distinctions are noted.

The following terms are used interchangeably in this book:

- Copywriting and marketing writing
- Text and copy
- Document, collateral, material, and piece. In many cases, these terms cover both printed and electronic media

Text examples are presented in this type style wherever they will help you understand a particular idea or technique. In most cases, these examples are drawn from actual marketing materials for high-tech products.

WHAT'S NEW IN THIS EDITION

Much of the material in this book was originally published under the title *Writing High-Tech Copy That Sells.* In this book, I have expanded and updated the content throughout and included many fresh ideas and examples. The following items are also new in this book:

- Information about copywriting issues and techniques for Web content and email marketing, presented where relevant throughout the book.
- New document types in Chapters 10 through 12 and a description of the marcom development process in Chapter 4.

- Greatly expanded and up-to-date resources, including books and links to useful Web sites. Many of these resources are listed at the end of each chapter. But you'll also want to check for my latest recommendations on the companion Web site: **writinghightech.com.**
- New marketing communication and PR terms defined in the glossary.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to the many people who provided valuable ideas, resources, feedback, and support for the initial development of this book and this second edition. My clients continue to provide challenging projects that expand my knowledge and stretch my skills as a marketing writer. I appreciate the learning opportunities they offer with each new project.

And special thanks to my family and friends. Your continuing, unshakeable belief in my abilities give me the confidence and motivation to undertake all of my ventures.

HERE'S TO YOUR SUCCESS

Copywriting That Sells High Tech is more than just the title of this book. By applying the ideas presented here, it is something you can do—in every one of your marcom projects.

Janice King

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ALLIANCE MATERIALS

REACHING DEALERS AND PARTNERS

For every product there is a salesperson; probably a distributor, dealer, or retail store; and perhaps a solution integrator or other marketing partner. All of these salespeople need information that will help them sell your product successfully. And in many cases, you will need materials that convince these sales partners of the value and opportunities in the product and market. You must sell *to* alliance partners as well as sell *through* them.

This chapter describes the types of marketing materials commonly used to attract, educate, and motivate dealers, distributors, retailers, and alliance partners.

APPLICATION GUIDE

> *"Just tell me what to buy."*
> *—line from an ad campaign for Subaru automobiles*

The more complex the product, the more an application guide can help a sales force explain it and prospects understand it. This type of guide is especially valuable for products that truly involve an

"application sell," where a salesperson shows how different aspects of the product can solve a prospect's unique problem.

An application guide is typically a booklet, worksheet, or software tool that presents information about potential product uses, often categorized according to customer type, industry, job function, or subject interest. It is a directory or handbook for choosing among products, models, or configurations within a product line to meet a specific need. This guide also can suggest applications for a product that may not be obvious from an initial assessment of the product's features.

Application guides can be organized by product, by market or industry, or by application type. Some companies produce application guides for use only by the sales staff or dealers, while others develop guides that are also suitable for distribution to potential buyers.

Readers should be able to understand the organization of the guide quickly and easily find information that is relevant to their need or situation. This means presenting similar information or content types consistently in the guide and clearly identifying optional or configuration-specific items.

Content Ideas—Application Guide

An application guide can accommodate many of the document elements and content types described in Chapters 5 and 6. In addition, an application guide may include the following material.

Guidance material. A table of contents and indexes by product name, model or part number; cross-references to options or accessory products. A glossary of product, technical, or industry terminology.

Visuals. Charts, checklists, or worksheets to show the match between products and applications or problems/needs. Design or configuration diagrams.

Application guidelines. Recommendations for planning the configuration and use of the product for each application. A list of product-selection criteria. A situation analysis worksheet.

Web Tips—Application Guide

A Web site can support an interactive application guide, helping the reader through multiple scenarios with configuration tools and worksheets. Work with your Web development team to determine the most effective—and feasible—way to present an application guide online.

DEMO OR MULTIMEDIA PRESENTATION DISK

A demonstration (demo) disk, delivered on a CD or DVD, is a software-based presentation that shows a product's capabilities, applications, and benefits. It can be a fulfillment piece for inquiries generated by advertising, direct-mail campaigns, or publicity.

Demo disks can be included in press kits, run on a salesperson's notebook computer for use in a group presentation, or be content posted for download from a Web site. They can be used for speaker support at speeches and presentations. Disks also can present an electronic "brochure" (in the form of a multimedia presentation) for a product or service.

When distributed by postal mail or at a trade show, a disk usually accompanies a package of materials, either in print or in additional files on the disk, that provide more detailed information on the product and company.

Types of Demo and Presentation Disks

Hardware demonstration. A disk with a multimedia program is often the only practical medium for presenting demonstrations of hardware products. This is especially true in the case where an evaluation unit is too expensive or impractical to offer to every prospect, or when it would be difficult to set up a live demonstration. Video and multimedia techniques can show live operation in a lab or customer setting, or provide a simulation that incorporates product images or video clips of the hardware unit's operation.

Sales force education and support. The large amount of information that can be stored on a disk can help salespeople and dealers understand an extensive product line that has constant

changes, additions, and deletions. If a demo program is included on the disk, it can help to ensure the consistency of demos among salespeople.

Demonstration kiosks. When kiosks are placed in a trade show or retail environment, the demo software can incorporate a tracking capability that measures the number of people who access the demo and what they do with it. An interactive survey can be included with the demo to ask questions and record responses from users.

Content Ideas—Demo and Presentation Disks

The content of a demo or presentation disk will vary depending on whether it is in a "brochure" or "working model" form. Where possible, follow these guidelines:

- State the system requirements and instructions for running the demo on the disk label.
- Use a title screen to present the primary marketing message, instructions for running the demo, and a list of any special keys that control the program.
- Use a closing screen to present a call to action or contact information, or to restate the key marketing message. Program the demo to always show this screen before terminating, regardless of the point where the viewer exits the demo.
- Present an overview of the product before you present detailed feature information. This introduction section should be brief, as prospects will be anxious to get into the "meat" of the demo quickly.
- Make sure the prospect will be able to distinguish between the text in your demo messages and any text that appears in the product demonstrated.
- Organize the demo around a presentation of features or applications, or show a typical user session for the product. However, verify that the on-screen copy presents benefits as well as feature information.
- Show the same examples and messages in the printed materials that accompany the demo disk.

- Include product literature or a purchase discount coupon that a user can print from the disk.

Content Ideas—Materials in the Disk Package

Many demo disks are accompanied by a brochure and other printed material, such as:

- A cover letter to encourage viewing of the demo program, state the key marketing messages, and provide a call to action and contact information.
- Product brochure or data sheet for the main product as well as accessory products.
- Instruction booklet for a "test drive" or "working model" demo.
- Samples of printed output if the demo or working model does not offer a printing capability.
- Specially designed mailing envelope or box for the demo disk and its accompanying materials.
- Order form and information on pricing and options if the objective of the demo is to motivate an immediate product purchase.

PARTNERS PROGRAM COLLATERAL

If your company sells extensively through dealers, marketing partners, or third-party developers, you may develop a complete set of marcom materials targeted to this group. A partners program brochure is the most common of these materials. It describes the benefits of working with your company, the market opportunities addressed by your products, and the programs, services, and support offered to partners. Many of the ideas presented in this section also apply to programs that serve third-party developers.

Content Ideas—Partners Program Collateral

Any partners program collateral can incorporate many of the content types described in Chapter 6 for sales, services, and company

information. More specifically, materials targeted to partners usually describe the benefits of becoming a partner such as:

- Marketing programs, materials, sales and technical support, sales lead programs, and other services and resources offered to partners.
- Sales incentives, discounted prices, financing options, and cooperative advertising funds.
- Conferences and special events, training and certification offerings.

In addition, partner materials may cover:

- Descriptions of the partnership levels.
- Information programs and resources that require payment of an additional fee.
- Requirements of candidates and procedures for acceptance into the partners program.
- Guidelines for using the company and partner program brands, with logo and other files available for download.

Web Content for Resellers and Partners

Many companies maintain a Web site dedicated to the interests of resellers. All of the materials described in this section can be posted to or adapted for a Web site. In addition, Web content can take advantage of other capabilities, such as:

- Dealer locator and links.
- Collection of information about prospective customers (lead gathering) through online registration, surveys, and contests promoted to site visitors.
- Downloads area and sales/technical support newsgroups or bulletin board area.
- An email newsletter for promotions and information on new products, tailored to resellers and partners.

POINT-OF-SALE MATERIAL

If your product is sold in retail stores, you may write copy for small brochures, flyers, signs, or other pieces displayed in the area

where a customer actually purchases the product. Called point-of-sale (POS) or point-of-purchase materials, they may appear on shelves, kiosks, aisle ends, and cash-register counters.

The primary objective of these materials is to catch the attention of a browsing shopper and encourage him to read the product's package for more information or make an impulse purchase. POS materials can announce special offers such as a sale price, competitive upgrades, or purchase incentives. They also can support promotional activity by a retailer such as a special price when the customer purchases a product bundle.

Content Ideas—POS Materials

POS materials typically focus on product information (see Chapter 6). They can use many of the text techniques described in Chapter 7. However, because you may be working with a small size, limit the amount of text and choose words that convey the point with clarity, conciseness, and impact. Your message must attract attention at a glance, so limit each piece to one high-impact message.

The following types of information are presented most frequently in POS materials:
- Highlights of product features or a new version
- Information on special prices or sales incentive offers
- Quotes from product reviews or customer testimonials
- Comparisons of product models
- Cross-sell of accessories, supplies, or related products
- Guarantee or warranty statements

SALES GUIDE OR KIT

No matter how highly you think of a product, salespeople or dealers may not share your enthusiasm at first. You need to sell them on the idea of selling the product, especially if they have many other products competing for their time, mind share, or shelf space. A sales guide supports this education and motivation process for a specific product, a product line, or all products sold by your company.

A sales guide is a notebook, CD/DVD, or package of Web content or printed materials that helps a salesperson learn about a product and how to sell it. The guide should contain material that is specifically targeted to the sales staff, not a rehash of customer material.

Content Ideas—Sales Guide

A sales guide can incorporate many of the content types, document elements, and text techniques described in Chapters 5 through 7. This guide can also be posted on the company Web site as a PDF file or as HTML content with links to the listed information and tools.

Dealer program information. Description of the dealer program for the product. Policies, training, incentives, and support services provided by your company. Plans for advertising, publicity, seminars, and trade-show activity by your company to support the dealer's efforts.

Market information. Needs, trends, opportunities, buying factors, and other characteristics of each target market. Guidelines for qualifying prospects and determining the potential success and value of a sales opportunity.

Product information. Product overview, including key features and benefits as well as platforms and options. Product catalogs or a complete set of product literature, press clippings, and case studies. Company information such as a capabilities overview, annual report, or corporate backgrounder.

Sales strategies. Description of the typical sales process and techniques for effective selling; key selling points for the product and advice on how to overcome prospect objections.

Competitive position. Information on strengths and weaknesses of competitive vendors and products; ideas for selling against the competition.

Sales tools. A description of or links to the sales tools your company will offer to dealers. Examples include:
- Presentation slides with speaker notes, product demonstration guidelines or a demo script, an application guide, configuration worksheets, and proposal template.

- Electronic files and reproducible master prints for ads, brochures, sales letters, Web content, banner ads, email messages, and other print or online materials that can be customized with the dealer's name and contact information.
- Copies of sales bulletins or newsletters. Produced on a monthly or quarterly basis, these documents reinforce the salesperson's interest in your product, provide information on new product capabilities or applications, and offer selling tips.
- Price lists showing dealer pricing and suggested retail prices.
- Ordering information and forms for products, sales collateral, and other dealer materials or services.

Company contacts. Resources and contacts for selling assistance and additional information; include telephone numbers, email addresses, and Web URLs for your company's dealer program.

SALES PRESENTATION

Sales presentation materials are typically computer slides or a multimedia demo that a salesperson can use in a face-to-face meeting with a prospect or in a standup presentation for a group.

A presentation can be made to sell a product (Figure 12.1), describe the capabilities of your company, offer viewpoints on industry trends or issues, or provide a tutorial about a technology or application.

Sales Presentation Section
Overview or agenda for the presentation
Customer needs, current situation, or trends
Description of the product or solution, with features and benefits
Possible applications (if relevant)
Case studies, test results, or other supporting evidence for the stated benefits and features
Implementation plans; service and support
Future directions for the product or solution

Strengths of your company as a vendor

Restatement of proposed solution, its key benefit, and how it meets customer needs

Call to action; can be an open-ended question to start the discussion when the presentation is made in a group meeting

Figure 12.1 A standard structure for a sales presentation.

Preparing a presentation usually involves creating two sets of materials: the slides and a script or set of speaker's notes.

Content Ideas—Presentation

While they can accommodate any subject matter, presentation slides are more effective for engaging audience members when they incorporate the following guidelines:

- Present only one major topic or message per slide.
- Use phrases; complete sentences are not necessary.
- Convey substantive information in all text, including titles. Use phrases that convey action, benefits, or news such as *Performance more than doubles*, not Performance Improvements.
- Use callouts to highlight key information on a chart or graphic.
- Format text into bullet points; minimize the line length and number of bullets on each slide. For most slide formats, this means a maximum of seven words per line and seven lines per slide.
- Use a subtitle to expand a message, especially for a slide that has a graphic as the major element.
- Use abbreviations and acronyms only when they are known by the audience, explained by the speaker, or defined on handout material.

Some presentations are developed to run independently, with a recorded narration. Videos, demo disks, and audio files stored on a Web page also need narration scripts. The guidelines below will help you write narration that is engaging, understandable, and effective for delivering its message.

Content Ideas—Narration

Writing style. Use short sentences and active voice. Choose the shortest and simplest words that will convey your meaning; avoid words that have multiple syllables or are difficult to pronounce. Use a style and tone that is somewhere between the formality of written text and the informality of conversational speech. As with all text, avoid colloquialisms and local references if they might be misunderstood or misinterpreted by listeners.

Acronyms. List the component words of acronyms, then state the acronym. For example: *"…connects universal serial bus devices, also known as USB devices, to the PC…"* If the presentation is lengthy, you may want to restate the component words later in the script.

Pronunciation. Provide a pronunciation guide for names and terms that may be unfamiliar to the narrator. Place the pronunciation in brackets next to the term and use bold or italic type to show which syllable(s) should receive emphasis.

Practice. Read the narration aloud to verify correct and complete use of all punctuation. Use an ellipsis (…) to indicate a pause within a sentence or between phrases.

SPEECH

A speech is a spoken presentation made by a company representative. It may be accompanied by visual aids such as slides, video, or a demonstration, but it is primarily read from a text written in advance. A speech can be made on almost any topic, but it typically provides information or a viewpoint on industry trends and issues.

In addition to the promotional value of the actual speech presentation, copies of the speech can be distributed as handouts, included in a press kit, posted on the Web, or adapted for a magazine article.

Writing a speech involves the special challenge of matching the text to the speaker's personality and speaking skills. Work with the speaker to identify her speech patterns, preferred expressions, and delivery style.

It is absolutely essential that you read a draft speech aloud yourself. Better yet, ask the speaker to practice delivering the speech. In this rehearsal, verify that the speaker can read the text easily, without stumbles, running out of breath, or misplaced pauses. Based on this practice delivery, you can work with the speaker to revise the structure, specific words, or pacing cues of the speech.

In addition to the speech text itself, you may want to prepare two other documents for each speech. The first is a biographical paragraph the event host can read when introducing the speaker. The second is a list of anticipated questions (and their answers) to guide the speaker if a question period will follow the speech.

Content Ideas—Speech

A speech can accommodate many of the content types covered in Chapter 6 and the text techniques in Chapter 7. In addition, consider these items for every speech:

- The speech title should clearly convey the topic or viewpoint discussed in the speech.
- A single theme or message should be carried through the entire speech. The end of the speech should summarize the messages or tie back into the theme, and give the audience a signal that the speaker is drawing to a close.
- Use short, declarative sentences and repeat nouns instead of using pronouns.

Any use of humor, imagery, and anecdotes must be appropriate to the topic, as well as understandable and acceptable to the audience.

VIDEO, AUDIO, AND ANIMATION PROJECTS

The multimedia elements of audio, video, and animation can be an important part of Web content, multimedia presentations, and Webcasts. In addition, a video can be a project itself. You may receive an assignment to write a script for a video or for audio narration of a demo disk or presentation.

As a copywriter, you will need to understand how to use these elements effectively across different marcom projects. Yet when writing for multimedia projects, Horton advises writers to "overcome your bias for words. …Do not let your proficiency and familiarity with words lead you to use them when a picture or sound effect would better tell the story."[1]

Caution: Verify that your company has the rights or a license to use any multimedia element produced by someone else. For example, you cannot include a clip from a favorite music recording without obtaining permission or a license. (See Chapter 8 for a detailed discussion of rights and licensing.)

Audio. An audio file or clip can appear on a Web page or in an HTML-formatted email, provide the narration for a promotional disk or trade-show demo system, or be part of a multimedia presentation delivered by a speaker. On a Web site, audio can be an engaging way to deliver a welcome message, sales offer, or call to action. Customer testimonials, speeches, seminars, and press briefings are other content types that may be suitable for presentation as audio elements. Always capture audio clips from a high-quality recording and consider providing a written transcript for users who may have trouble downloading or listening to the audio file.

Video. A video clip can show a product demonstration, a speech or event (live or via Webcast), or customer testimonials. The guidelines for audio also apply to video clips posted to a Web site. A sales or news video can promote a product or company. Videos are commonly used to:

- Introduce a new product or upgrade by providing information and a demonstration.
- Show customer case studies.
- Present capabilities information about the company.
- Record a speech, presentation, user-group meeting, or other event.

All or portions of a video can be distributed on tape, CD/DVD, or posted for download from a Web site.

Videoconference broadcasts or streaming video on a Web site (Webcasts) are used by some high-tech companies to announce new products or discuss financial results. A video recording of the broadcast may be made at that time for later distribution; Webcasts can be available on the site indefinitely. Broadcasts also may be used for live demonstrations of products that are conducted at a remote site but viewed at a conference, trade show, or on a Web site.

From a copywriter's perspective, a broadcast may combine aspects of a sales presentation, speech, and demo script. Supporting materials are often available to members of the audience, such as an agenda, copies of presentation slides, Q&A sheets, press kits, or product materials.

Animation. Use animation techniques to simulate an action, process, or activity. For example, an animated graph can show changes in data over time; a product demonstration can be simulated by creating an animation from several sequential images.

Content Ideas—Video

Writing video scripts is a unique and specific form of marketing writing; see the Resources section for recommended books. The following are general guidelines for using copy in a video:

- The opener and closer of the video should work together in terms of both messages and visuals.
- Present a call to action and show contact information at the end of the video.
- Place a marketing message on the video packaging. This may be in the form of a teaser to encourage viewing.
- For any text that appears on-screen, keep it brief and use phrases instead of complete sentences.
- Use caption text to identify people interviewed for the video; show name, job title, company or organization.
- If the video includes a product demonstration, make a statement at the beginning about what will be covered in the demonstration.

Content Ideas—Audio Narration

For a video or multimedia presentation, you may need to write a script for audio narration. Keep in mind these pointers:

- Read the script aloud to verify pacing, emphasis, clarity of message, and appropriate pauses. If possible, read the script while reviewing the actual video or multimedia sequence to verify correct timing.
- Show the pronunciation of technical terms, acronyms, and product names if the narrator is not familiar with those words. Place the pronunciation in parentheses immediately after the appropriate term.
- Use underline or bold format to highlight key words for the narrator to emphasize when reading the script.
- If the narrator will be reading the script while viewing the video or multimedia sequence, include cues about what is displayed at each major transition.

RESOURCES

The recommended books and other resources listed below provide additional information on the topics discussed in this chapter. For an updated list and other materials related to this book, visit **writinghightech.com**.

Books

Anthony Friedmann: *Writing for Visual Media.* Focal Press, 2001. A textbook on writing video scripts; includes a CD with additional material and example clips.

Catherine Kitcho: *High-Tech Product Launch.* Pele Publications, 1999. Provides an in-depth discussion of product launch activities and strategies.

Michael E. McGrath: *Product Strategy for High Technology Companies.* McGraw-Hill, 2000. A good general book on marketing for high-tech products.

William Van Nostran: *The Media Writer's Guide: Writing for Business and Educational Programming.* Focal Press, 1999. Covers writing techniques for multimedia projects.

Web Sites

CRN Magazine, formerly *Computer Reseller News* (**crn.com**)

VAR Business Magazine, (**varbusiness.com**)

You may also get ideas for alliance materials and Web content by looking at the major technology company Web sites such as Microsoft (**microsoft.com**) and IBM (**ibm.com**).

REFERENCES

[1] William Horton: "New Media Literacy," *Technical Communication,* Fourth Quarter 1993