

Punch up your prose

In an information-saturated world, ho-hum writing just won't cut it. If you want to grab readers by the collar and keep them hooked until the final word, your message needs a little zest and zing. But how do you move from yawn to yowza? At Cadmium Red, we've boiled it down to seven tips:

1. **Vary your sentence length.** Monotonously sized sentences are a sure way put your readers to sleep. Mix it up. Short ones hammer a point home. Meanwhile, longer ones give you the room to probe more deeply into an idea or paint a scene with vivid details.
2. **Address readers directly.** We're wired to pay attention when people speak to us. So rather than say "our i-Gizmo puts power in the hands of our customers," rephrase it as "our i-Gizmo puts power in your hands."
3. **Select verbs with verve.** Sure, adjectives and adverbs have their place in strong writing, but odds are the right verb would create even more impact. Instead of saying "John *slowly walks* to the store," consider having him *saunter* or *amble* or *trudge* his way there.
4. **Choose telling quotes.** Quotes should add splashes of colour to your writing, not just pile on more information. Choose ones that infuse emotion, perspective and your subject's voice into your copy.
5. **Engage different senses.** We experience the world through more than just our eyes, so don't limit yourself to visual examples and metaphors. Think "crushing heat" or "screaming engines." And if the room you're describing is filled with the scent of hyacinths or diesel oil or roasting coffee, that's a detail you won't want to omit.
6. **Wake up your readers with fresh metaphors.** Don't "break new ground" or "think outside the box." Instead, "drop a 10-ton bomb on the status quo."
7. **Use alliteration and rhythm.** Alliteration can add poetry and pattern to your text, while the right cadence carries your readers along for the ride.

A word of caution: just as too much chili pepper in a dish drowns out the other ingredients, spicing up your copy too much can overpower the message you're trying to convey. Applied judiciously, however, these tips could provide just the kick you're looking for.

Looking for content specialists who can inject a shot of wow into your communications?
Contact us at info@cadmiumred.ca.