

August 6, 2021 | Chris Lema

The Most Important Copywriting Formula for WordPress Plugin Companies

Writing Copy that Converts Isn't Easy Have you ever gotten an email from an old friend who tells you about a moment that, for you, was pretty ordinary, but to them was transformational? I got one this week. This one conversation, years ago, about a copywriting formula for his WordPress product had been pivotal.

Writing...

WordPress

Writing Copy that Converts Isn't Easy

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Writing copy that converts isn't easy. Especially if your background is in product development - where you're focused on writing great code. To suddenly shift to writing great copy isn't a natural move.

Why is writing good copy so hard?

The phrase "familiarity breeds contempt" isn't about software products, but it sure could be. Right?

The more time we spend on our products, the more frustrating things are. We see every issue, every mistake, and even non-mistakes that just bother us. And when we see everything like that, it's pretty hard to write copy that doesn't have all sorts of caveats.

The first time I wrote copy for our product, I wrote, "It's one of the best..." and my boss walked over, read it, and asked me, "If you can't say it's the best, who will?"

Ugh.

But it's not just that we know our products in detail.

The other problem with writing persuasive copy is that we often jump straight into the things we think are cool. We're selling to ourselves. (I wrote about [scratching our own itch the other day](#).) But as I told you in that post, **our customers are not us**.

And getting into someone else's shoes is really hard.

At least without a copywriting formula for WordPress products. (And to be clear, it's a copywriting formula that works for non-WordPress

products too.)

Have you watched my bridge framework?

I have shared, often, my framework for writing content for landing pages, sales pages, webinars, and more. I call it **the Bridge Framework** and you can see the quick version via video or slides.

Why am I bringing it up?

Because my framework is a combination of the Jobs To Be Done theory and the copywriting formula I'm talking about here.

In other words, it's going to sound familiar.

The Most Important Copywriting Formula for WordPress Plugin Companies

Ready for the most important copywriting formula for WordPress plugin companies? Here it is: P-A-S.

Problem - Agitate - Solve

Let's dig into it.

Problem

The other night I was talking to a friend as we were reflecting on a product idea we'd talked about a while ago, which someone else had

now created (and was having success). If you're like us, that's always an easy conversation to have.

But then he said something that was brilliant, and at the heart of the "problem" part of this copywriting formula.

"Right now I'm trying to find something really painful that people would pay for."

It's not just having a problem.

A lot of people have pitched me products and start by talking about a problem that I neither have, nor want to spend money to solve.

Imagine if I walked up to you and said, "Have you ever thought about the boxes that pile up in your house from Amazon shipments?" You might think, yeah, that's kind of a problem. But if I pitched a service to pick them up (for \$100/month), I'm guessing you're going to pass. Right?

So how do we work with this part of the formula?

- **You need to be clear on what problem you're solving.** Sometimes we create products that we think are cool, but they were driven by the technology that was available. Or because we could. But we're not clear on any problem we're actually solving. So start there. Getting clarity here will help you move to the next step.
- **You also need to be certain that this is a serious problem.** I know all sorts of people who like to create products that already exist. It's a bit crazy. They say, "You know Slack? Well, what about Slack

right inside WordPress?" Every time I hear about a replicated product in a different tech stack, I scratch my head. It's hard to convince people that that's a problem that needs solving. So ask yourself if you're building something because you think it's cool, or whether it's a serious problem that people need solved.

- **Now you need to be able to articulate the problem clearly.** The last part is the hardest. Because it has to be easy to get. You want heads nodding quickly. Short sentences and small words.

Agitate

This part will often make WordPress plugin owners the most frustrated. Because, and this is a generalization, developers are straightforward. If we can agree on the problem, why keep talking about it. Let's move to the solution!

But no, the point is to be persuasive.

And that doesn't happen if you say, "listen, we agreed it's a problem. I have a solution. Just buy it, ok?"

Instead, we need to double down a bit. That's where the agitation comes in.

If you know me, then you know I use one phrase more than any other. My close friends laugh when they hear it because they know I'm moving into the agitation phase.

I say, "If you're like my other clients," and that's just the start to help a prospect know that they're in a larger community of folks feeling the same pain.

But that's when I'm going to highlight:

- **What happened when you tried** to fix the problem, and it got worse
- **How much you spent** trying to resolve things, without it working
- **All the other ways** people have tried to fix this already

In my **Bridge Framework**, I call it the River and the Roadblocks.

It creates empathy because the reader (or listener) knows we've been there. They also feel the compassion of knowing there's no judgement (just experience).

And that empathy drives trust. Trust that helps persuade.

Solve

We're finally at the part of this copywriting formula for WordPress product owners where we get to talk about the solution.

But let me first make sure we're clear about when it's ok to get here.

We have to make sure we've done enough agitation to convince prospects we've been where they are. We have to make sure we've done enough agitation to convince prospects that we truly understand the problem.

The difference between "pitch mode" and "being helpful" is how well we do our agitation.

With that said, we're on to the solution part of the copywriting framework. And that's where we get to connect every feature we built back to the pains customers have had.

This is why I often tell you that if you haven't figured out these pains already, it's hard to know what features to build.

But if you've designed your features to match and solve real problems, this part doesn't come across as sales at all. Yet it's incredibly convincing.

Writing Great Copy Takes Time

So there you go. The PAS formula will help you. I promise. But it will take time. You'll likely have to do it a lot before you get good at it. But all great skills take practice.

But what if you need help right away? What if you don't have time to get really good at this over the next quarters or years?

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chris Lema has spent twenty-five years in tech leadership, product development, and coaching. He builds AI-powered tools that help experts package what they know, build authority, and create programs people pay for. He writes about AI, leadership, and motivation.



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