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# Packaging Hacks for Busy Food and Drink Producers (1): Don't Make Your Copy all About You

Transcript of Episode #017 of *The Artisan Food & Drink Business Show*

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Catherine: Hello. Welcome to episode #017 of *The Artisan Food and Drink Business Show*, the show where artisan producers tell their brand story and share the secrets of their success. I'm your host Catherine Moran.

Today's show is a solo show and it's the first of a mini-series on mistakes to avoid when you're developing your food and drink packaging, including the design and copy for your packaging.

These next few episodes of the show will be shorter than usual — about ten minutes or so.

The mistakes I'll be describing are ones I made when I was developing the packaging for my artisan food products. I think it will be useful to tell you about them so *you* can avoid them and therefore avoid having to re-do your packaging, which would be expensive.

These episodes may also help you to ensure your food or drink packaging is the best it can be, which can increase your chance of persuading customers to buy your products. And also, you want to be proud of your packaging — that confidence will come through when you are selling to customers including food and drink buyers. So let's get on with the show.

## Why You Shouldn't Make Your Copy all About You

The most important mistake to avoid is making your copy all about you and your company. Copy, as I mentioned in the last episode of the show (Episode #016, with Tom Hunt, which was about [food and drink branding and PR](#)), is the words you use on your packaging to sell your products.

So why is it a mistake to make your copy all about you? You would think the copy *should* be all about you and your company. Isn't that the very reason why the customer has picked up your product and is reading the copy — to find out about you and your product? Well, yes and no. Customers *are* interested in your company and your product, but only in terms of how your company and product meet their needs and satisfy their desires.

Think about it... Why would a customer care about the fact that you won an award for your food? Not because it means you are an accomplished cook or baker or sausage maker or a brilliant person, but because your product might taste delicious. It will feel good in their belly.

Why would a customer care that you use free range eggs rather than eggs from battery chickens in your product? Or that your beef product comes from grass-fed cows? Or that you use only locally sourced ingredients? Because animal welfare or the health of the planet or food sustainability is important to *them*, not because it shows how ethical or eco-friendly your ingredient sourcing policy is.

We're talking here about perspective and needs; about how you see things and how your customer sees things. And about your needs versus your customer's needs.

## **Your Food or Drink Copy is Most Effective When it's a Mirror**

So, with that in mind, think of your copy as a mirror: it should reflect the needs of your customers back to them. When customers read your copy, they should be reading the set of their desires or needs that your product will satisfy.

This is why your copy should act like a series of tick boxes, with each tick box being a customer desire. The more boxes your copy ticks, the more likely it is that a customer will buy your product. I mean tick boxes here in the metaphorical sense, not the literal sense. But you can, of course, use literal tick boxes, too. They're useful for conveying your key product benefits quickly, when the content space on your packaging is scarce, as it often is.

## **How to Make Your Food or Drink Copy All About Your Customer**

So, how do you make sure your copy is about your customers and not about you? You frame or pitch your copy in such a way that it aligns with your customer's needs. You let your customer's needs determine your copy.

As Neil Patel and Joseph Putnam put it in [\*The Definitive Guide to Copywriting\*](#):

'The secret is that you can write about yourself so long as it's in the context of providing value for your customers. It's ok to write about yourself if you're providing information that's useful to the people who may want to do business with you, but it's not ok to write about yourself just for the sake of writing about yourself.'

Good food or drink copy says 'These are the things about my product that you are looking for, that are so desirable to you, that meet your needs so well, that you find so irresistible, that you will buy my product.'

So, in other words, going back to perspective, you describe your products from your customer's perspective.

## The Two Tactics to Use

There are two tactics you can use in your copy to describe your products from your customer's perspective and avoid making it all about you.

Firstly, use the words 'I', 'me', 'my', 'our' as little as possible. Instead, address to your customer directly and use 'you' and 'your' whenever possible.

The second tactic is to turn your product features into customer benefits.

## Examples of Copy That's Too Much 'Me, Me, Me'

Let's look at the first tactic for a moment, and at some examples that show what happens when you don't address your customer in your copy. These examples are actually from copy I wrote for the packaging of one of my products, my Rich Chocolate Mousse.

'A note on **our** ingredients.'

'**We** make our [chocolate mousse] with entirely natural ingredients.'

'The texture of **our** chocolate mousse is creamy and smooth and melt-in-the-mouth.'

'To ensure a deep chocolate flavour **we** barely sweeten our mousse.'

'**I** use natural, wholesome ingredients, and time-honoured cooking techniques...'

There's a lot of 'me, me, me' and 'we, we', we' going on there. The copy is about me and my company rather than my customer. I didn't know any better at the time and I certainly wouldn't write copy like that now. To see a photo of the artwork for my Rich Chocolate Mousse check out the show notes for this episode at [myartisanbusiness.com](http://myartisanbusiness.com).

## Examples of Copy That's Appropriately 'You, You, You'

So what, then, does *good* food or drink copy look like when you use more 'you, you, you' and less 'me, me, me'?

Here's an example from the curry sauces product brochure from *Asiri Foods Ltd* (Asiri from *Asiri Foods* featured in [Episode #005](#) of the show):

'Convenience is key when it comes to preparing dinner for **your** family or friends, especially after **you** come home from a long day at work. With the release of our new authentic Sri-Lankan curry sauces we aim to alleviate all of these problems while making sure **you** get a product that is very healthy and nutritious at the same time.'

And here is another example from the product packaging for the *Spice Tailor's* Keralan Coconut Curry:

'The Spice Tailor range is truly versatile. Simply take **your** pick from the bits to buy, add the specially selected spices, stir in the sauce and **you** have a fresh authentic Indian meal in just 10 minutes!'

So there are some examples of the first tactic — using more 'you's' than 'me's' or 'I's' in your food or drink copy.

## Example of Copy That Turns Product Features into Customer Benefits

Let's now look at the second tactic, which is to turn product features into customer benefits. To do this you'll need to

understand what you customers' needs are. The previous examples from *Asiri Foods* and *The Spice Tailor* do this well.

### **Convenience and Health for Time Poor Individuals**

For example, *Asiri Foods* focuses on convenience and health for time-strapped people. Busy people often haven't got the time to make a curry sauce from scratch. *Asiri Foods'* curry sauces are ready-made, which means they are convenient for busy people. However, ready-made food is often highly processed and lacking in nutrition. But, *Asiri Foods* uses fresh, local ingredients, which means that her curry sauces are not only convenient but healthy and nutritious, too.

### **Versatility and Speed of Cooking**

*The Spice Tailor* focuses on versatility and speed of cooking. You as the customer can choose whatever you'd like to add to the curry sauce, it could be a meat addition like chicken or it could be a vegetable addition like chickpeas. This means that the customer has the option to add whatever they like, and it's all ready in just ten minutes.

Notice how powerful turning product features into customer benefits is. Both of these examples could have just stated that they are ready-made curry sauces. Instead, they have turned this into benefits for the customer: convenience, a healthy option, versatility and speed of cooking.

### **The Trick for Figuring out Your Product Features and Benefits**

The trick for doing this is to use the words 'which means that'. For example, if you were a lemon curd maker and you used only fresh lemon juice in your curd, your feature and benefit would be something like this:

'Our lemon curd contains only freshly-squeezed lemon juice, **which means that** you can enjoy the vibrant, zingy flavour of fresh lemon'.

Essentially, the lemon curd example answers your customers' question 'What's in it for me?' For more on the 'What's in it for me?' question and the concept of '[true benefits](#)' check out an excellent article, *Marketing Features vs. Benefits* at [entrepreneur.com](http://entrepreneur.com). I'll put a link to this in the show notes.

## Summing Up

To sum up, you should always try to make your food or drink packaging copy all about your customer. Your copy should be about showing customers how your product can meet their needs and satisfy their desires.

The two tactics you can use to write customer-focused copy are to use more 'you's' than 'me's' and to turn your product features into customer benefits. With that in mind, it's probably a good idea to take five minutes to write down the features and benefits for all your products.

So that's it for this episode. If you'd like to get a free transcript of this episode, just go to [www.myartisanbusiness.com](http://www.myartisanbusiness.com). You'll also find the show notes for this episode there and can check out some useful resources on food and drink packaging and copy.

To get in touch with me you can use the contact form on [myartisanbusiness.com](http://myartisanbusiness.com). If you'd like to hear when I publish new episodes of the show simply sign up to my weekly spam-free newsletter at [myartisanbusiness.com](http://myartisanbusiness.com). You can also find me on Twitter as [@FoodDrinkShow](https://twitter.com/FoodDrinkShow).

I'm Catherine Moran from the *Artisan Food and Drink Business Show*. Until next time, happy cooking, happy fermenting, happy brewing, and thanks for listening.

You can listen to this podcast episode at [myartisanbusiness.com/podcast](http://myartisanbusiness.com/podcast).