TomTortorici.com

Are You Using These
8 Bad Words
On Your Website?

Learn the terms that make today's buyers cringe – before you soil your brand's good reputation.

If you've ever included the following bad words on a website, you need not feel ashamed.

You'd probably seen them used so often, it wasn't clear that by now, they might be doing more harm than good.

Well, let's dig a little deeper, together. Then *you* decide whether to watch your language a bit closer in the future.

BAD WORD "experience"

AS IN *"... with over 14 years of industry experience ..."*

THE PROBLEM The thing is, *everyone* has experience. Buyers *expect* you to have experience. So...what *else* ya got? Plus it makes companies sound the same, all flaunting their 'experience.'

THE SOLUTION Show buyers what you've *learned* from all that experience, regarding *their* challenges and aspirations. And mention the ways people achieved what they needed, by trusting you. Also, what has your experience made you *great* at? Make *that* your unique competitive advantage. Otherwise, presenting 'experience' as your advantage implies that your competitors have never done this before. And that's just silly.
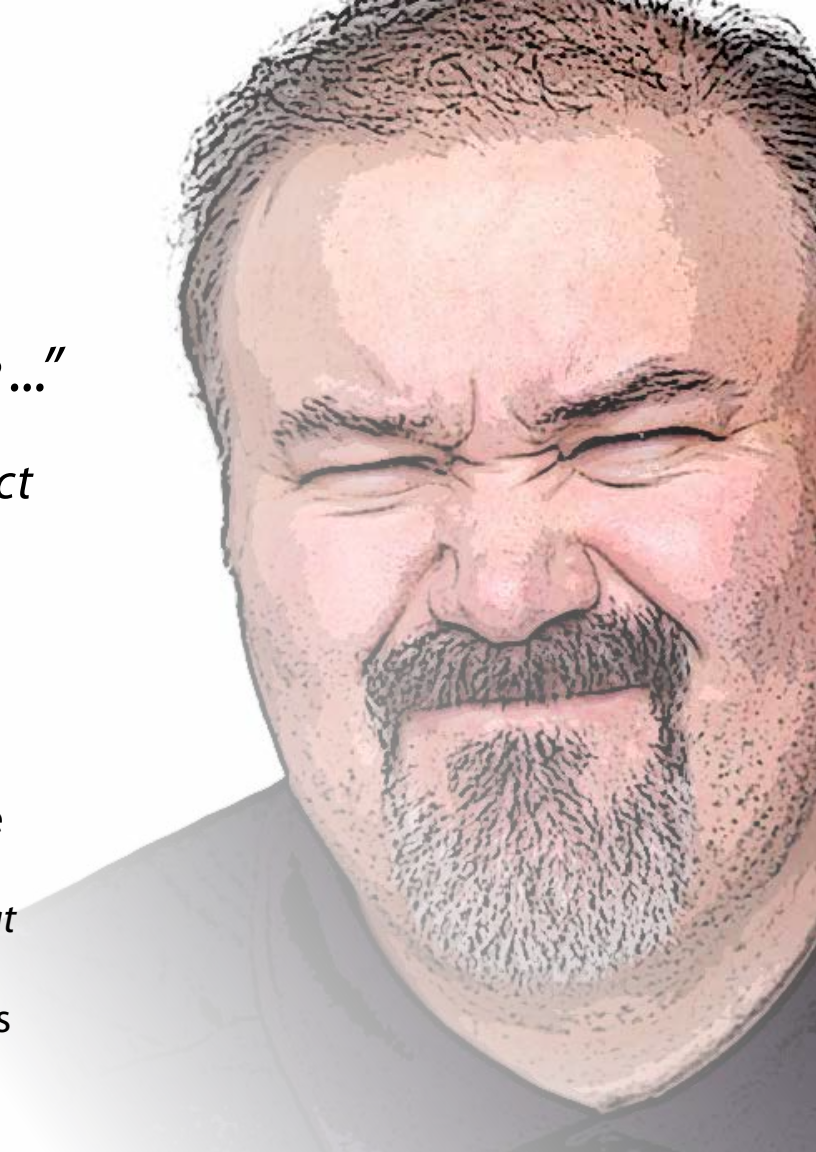
BAD WORD

"customer service"

AS IN *"... offering unparalleled customer service ..."*

THE PROBLEM First, nobody's sure what this vague marketing cliché actually means. Second, the term 'customer' reflects the point-of-view of company employees, and that's not who's visiting their website.

THE SOLUTION When *you're* making a buying decision, you're more likely to be influenced by specific benefits than generic promises. Everyone else, same thing. Will the company answer your call on the first ring? Will they carry your purchases out to your car? They should just say so. Also, using third-person terms like *our customers, clients* or *patients* when talking to customers, clients or patients is off-putting. Simply use the term 'you' – as you would in conversation.

BAD WORD

"pride"

AS IN   *"We pride ourselves on our attention to detail."*

THE PROBLEM   While the company's busy priding itself, it's ignoring whatever issue the buyer is trying to solve. Businesses think that since it's *their* website, it should be all about *them*. They should think again.

THE SOLUTION   Figure out whatever makes the *buyer* proud – being a good family protector, or an efficient employee – then show how your offerings help support *that*. This approach is more likely to get them leaning forward in their seats. And don't throw away your corporate points of pride – just find ways to turn them into real-world customer benefits. That requires thinking like a buyer instead of a seller – a little tricky at first, but worth the effort.
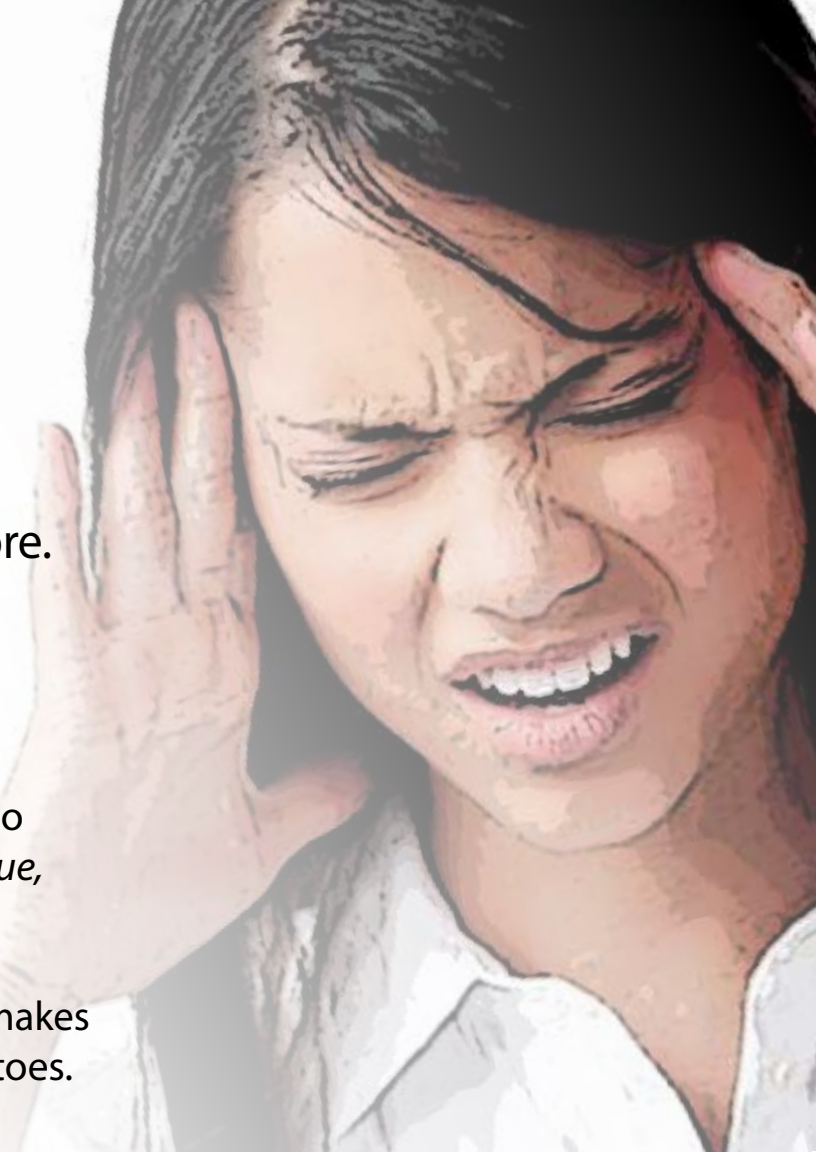
BAD WORD *4*

"committed"

"At Super Services LLC, we're committed to…"

THE PROBLEM

…excellence? …customer satisfaction? …exceeding your expectations? Sorry, but we've heard it all before. Even business owners aren't impressed when they see this term, but still use it on their own sites.

THE SOLUTION

Instead, try brief case studies or customer quotes showing how you went above and beyond to solve a pesky (but all too common) problem. The key is to start with the prospect's *issue,* not the company's *commitment*. Being self-centered pushes humans away rather than drawing them in. BTW, no one is impressed either that the company is an LLC. Including that makes them seem like small potatoes, trying to *sound* like big potatoes.
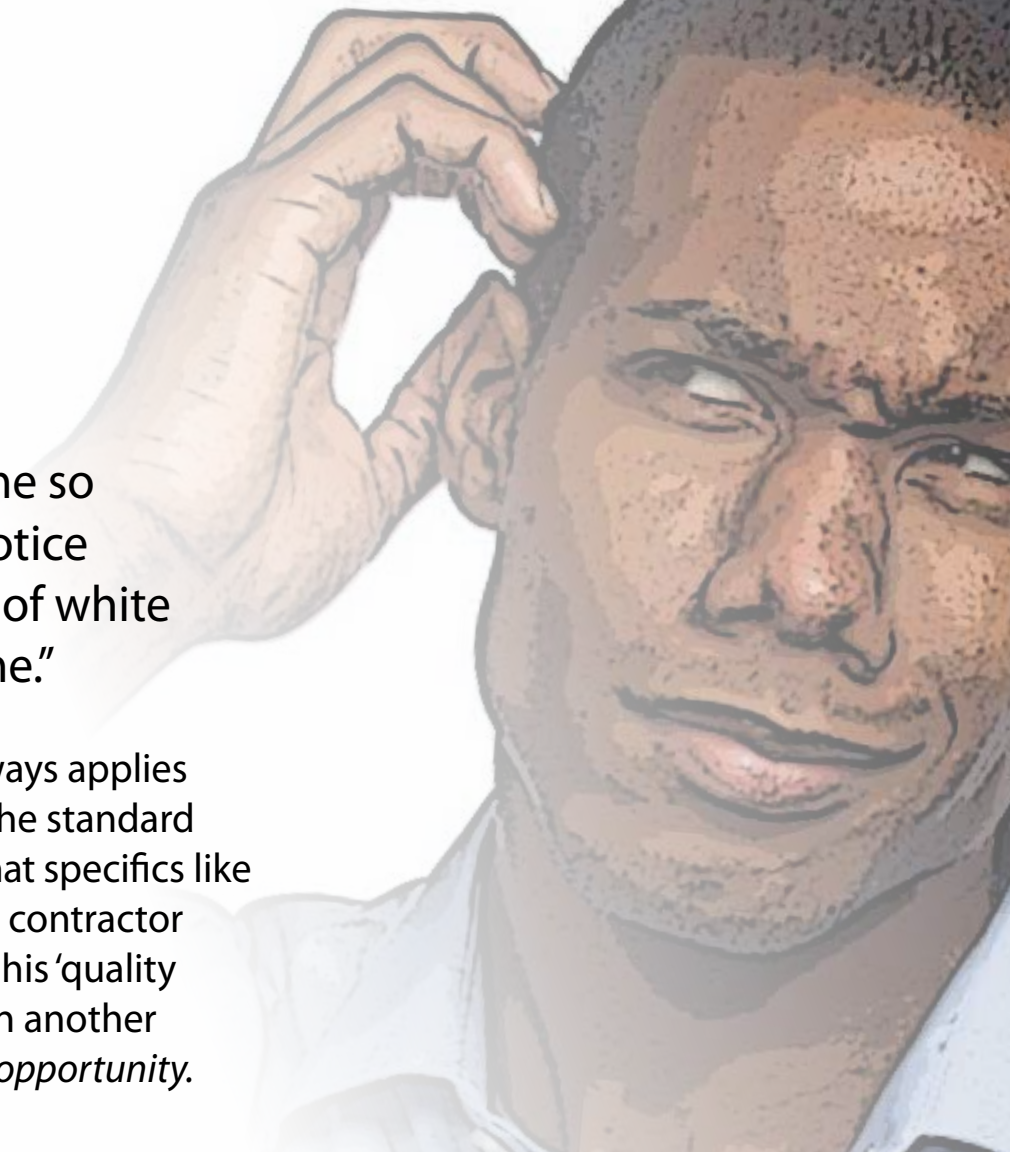
BAD WORD

"quality"

AS IN

"It's quality that sets us apart."

THE PROBLEM

A convenient catch-all word that's become so common and overused, we don't even notice it anymore. It's the marketing equivalent of white noise, and about as believable as "trust me."

THE SOLUTION

Let's say Bob's a home contractor. Let's say Bob always applies three coats of lacquer to better protect wood, vs. the standard practice of one coat. Maybe it didn't occur to Bob that specifics like this on his website really would 'set him apart' as a contractor with higher standards. Instead, sadly, he just touts his 'quality contracting service', because he saw that phrase on another contractor's website. That's what you call a *missed opportunity*.

BAD WORD "offer"

AS IN *"We're pleased to offer our new line of..."*

THE PROBLEM Effective selling isn't just about the company's *offerings*. It's about connecting with the emotional and/or logical sensibilities of the buyer. So turn that headline around: "*You'll* feel invincible in *your* new... camo underwear!"

THE SOLUTION Are all your offerings neatly organized in drop-down menus? Nice. But to actively engage customers, we also need to look at *their* mission from *their* perspective. Another example: instead of "We offer the following list of pet grooming services," try this: "Does Buddy need a bath to smell fresher – or a summer shave to reduce fleas?" When planning a new website, think about the requests, issues and concerns of past customers – and start *there*.

BAD WORD

"results"

AS IN

"... we know how to produce results..."

THE PROBLEM

I appreciate the can-do spirit. And yeah, we expect results when we spend money. But this generic term suggests that the company isn't quite sure what kind of 'results' their customers are actually looking for.

THE SOLUTION

Once again, let's say it together, *be specific*, *not vague*. If you produce the same fantastic *result* for everyone, hey, make that your home page banner headline. If you produce different results for different audiences or circumstances, maybe the headers on those 4-across boxes could be the beneficial *outcome* rather than the *name* of your service. For example, "Your own distinctive brand" instead of "Logo Design Package."
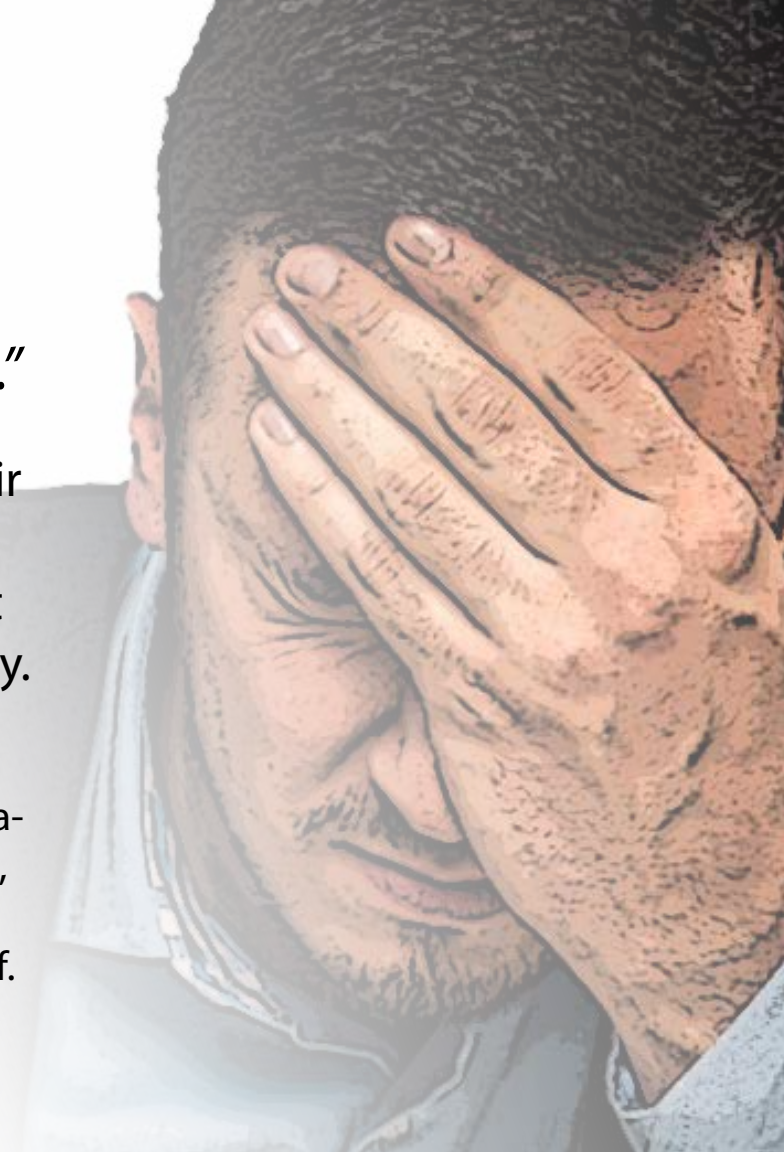
BAD WORD

"reputation"

AS IN *"...our company's reputation for stellar service..."*

THE PROBLEM If someone you just met started boasting about their own *reputation*, wouldn't that be a little unseemly? Even if they did actually have a good rep, pointing it out would tend to give them less, not more, credibility.

THE SOLUTION A more effective approach is to have someone *else* (especially an authoritative source) talk about the company's great reputation. Then, use that as a testimonial on the company's website, or get them to post a Google review. We're all aware of the power of 'social proof' for influencing people to do or buy stuff. But the whole *point* of social proof is that it comes from objective outsiders, not insiders with an obvious agenda.

Of course, the real risk of having bad words on websites is that young people might see them.

And young people today are especially distrustful of worn-out, inauthentic marketing phrases – and the brands that use them.

Sure, it's hard to know exactly what to say, and how to say it, on today's business websites.

That's why there are copywriters…

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