

**Creating
headlines**
can be tough.



01 / WHY IS THE RIGHT HEADLINE IMPORTANT?

- Story Summarization
- Interest Generation
- Immediacy Satisfaction
- Attention Direction

02 / REASONABLE AND EMOTIONAL: MAIN APPROACHES TO CREATING HEADLINES

- 4 U's Method
- Modernized Aristotle's Tactic

03 / THE COMPLICATED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN HEADLINES AND CONTENT

- Do Not Be Misleading
- Deliver Your Promises
- Do Not Fake It
- Bring Something New to the Table

04 / FINAL THOUGHTS

INTRODUCTION

Should it be rational or emotional?
Traditional or creative?
Sensational or precise?

The short answer is that it depends on the message you want to convey. But to master the art of writing great titles, you have to dive into further investigation.



Touching, Relatable, and Clickable. Explicit Instructions on **How to Write a Headline** That Hits

In a world where people do not have time to read about things that they are actually interested in (they save it for later and almost always forget), getting their attention with one or two phrases at your disposal is challenging to say the least.

So, how can you hook these by-passers without turning to clichés or stooping to cheap tricks? The answer lies in achieving a balance between being accurate, interesting, thought-provoking, and understandable. This is not an easy task.

Hence, even if this is not your first rodeo, you might use this comprehensive guide on how to write headlines to step up your game.

01

**Why Is the Right
Headline
Important?**

Why Is the Right Headline Important?

If you have ever written anything, whether it is a blog post, an article, a popup message/e-mail, or a novel, you know the struggle you face while choosing the right tone and words for your headline.

The Great Gatsby could have been known as The High-Bouncing Lover, Gold-Hatted Gatsby, Trimalchio in West Egg, or at least four other variations. Upworthy, a digital platform dedicated to positive narrative and drawing attention to the areas that call for changes, believes that every writer should write no less than 25 headlines before choosing the one that fits. First, you will come up with something dull, basic, and obvious, but at some point in this list, you will be forced to get creative.

So, why would anyone voluntarily go through all these troubles instead of just going with the first suitable option? Because choosing the right headline is a vital step in communicating with potential readers.

The deep dive into the world of the headlines' crafting allowed the researchers Joshua Scacco & Ashley Muddiman to point out 4 primary functions of a title:

1 Story Summarization

You need to convey the main theme of your piece of writing in advance because:

- **It helps the users decide if it is worth their time.**

Truth be told, if you are building your marketing strategy on the infamous people's shorter than a goldfish, 8 seconds attention span statistics, chances are you are following the false lead.

First, let's clear the name of the goldfish, their memory is actually very impressive (they can remember things for at least five months and not the declared in different sources 9 or 3 seconds).

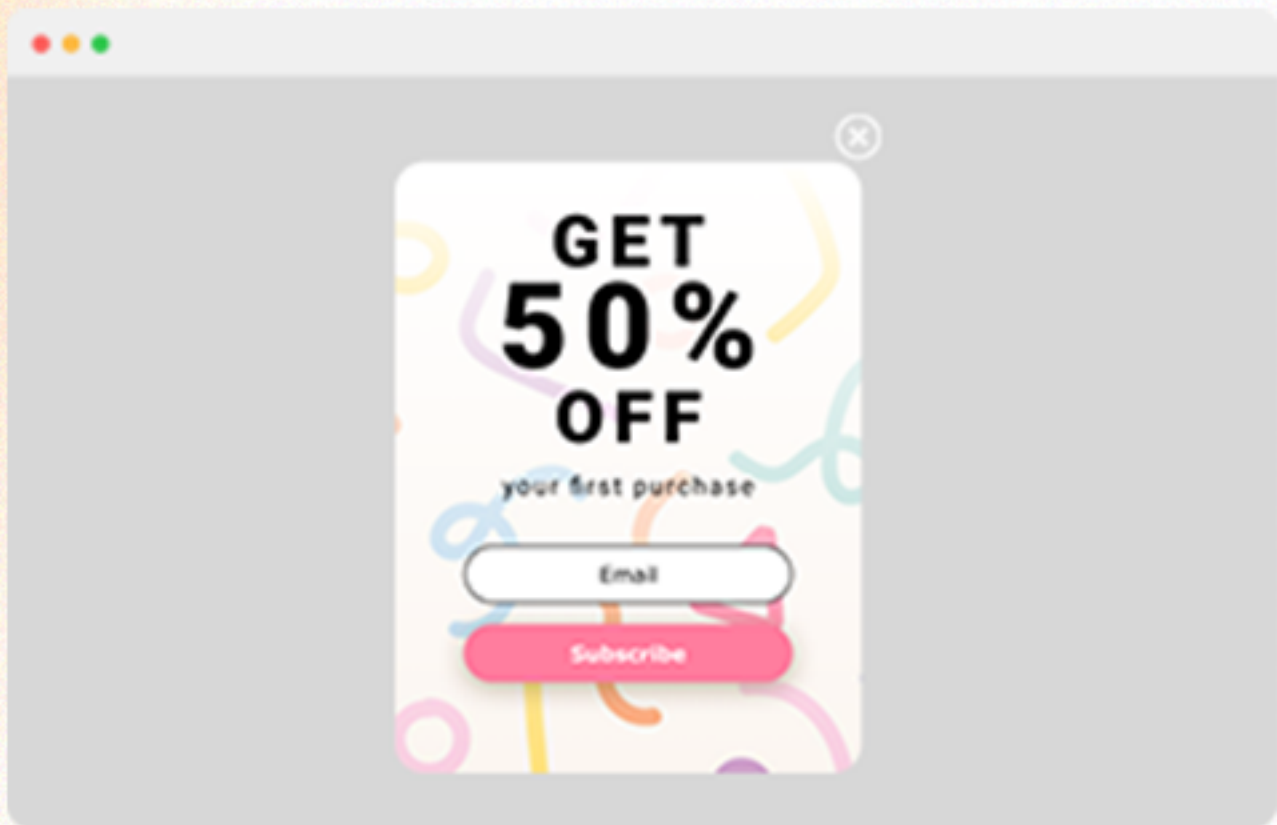
Second, nature constructed humans with a short attention span intentionally to allow them to switch between a focused mode to perform a complex task and a diffuse attention mode to monitor the surroundings.

European scientists determined that people's ability to pay attention to all the perceived information is actually narrowing down, but not because they become less clever. The problem is caused by the pressing effect of the informational avalanche that comes at us every day in the form of social media posts, news, articles, essays, etc. As a result, users are forced to be more selective with what they read to avoid draining their brains' concentration resources.

Thus, people opt for the things that strike a chord with them. Yet, how can users decide whether the content is of any interest to them unless a headline tells them what to expect?

- **Readers will understand the message better.**

A series of experiments conducted by John R. Surber & Mark Schroeder shows that headings help you better recollect the information from the rest of the text. Plus, it also indicates that titles help you recall and activate the data on the topic that you are already familiar with.



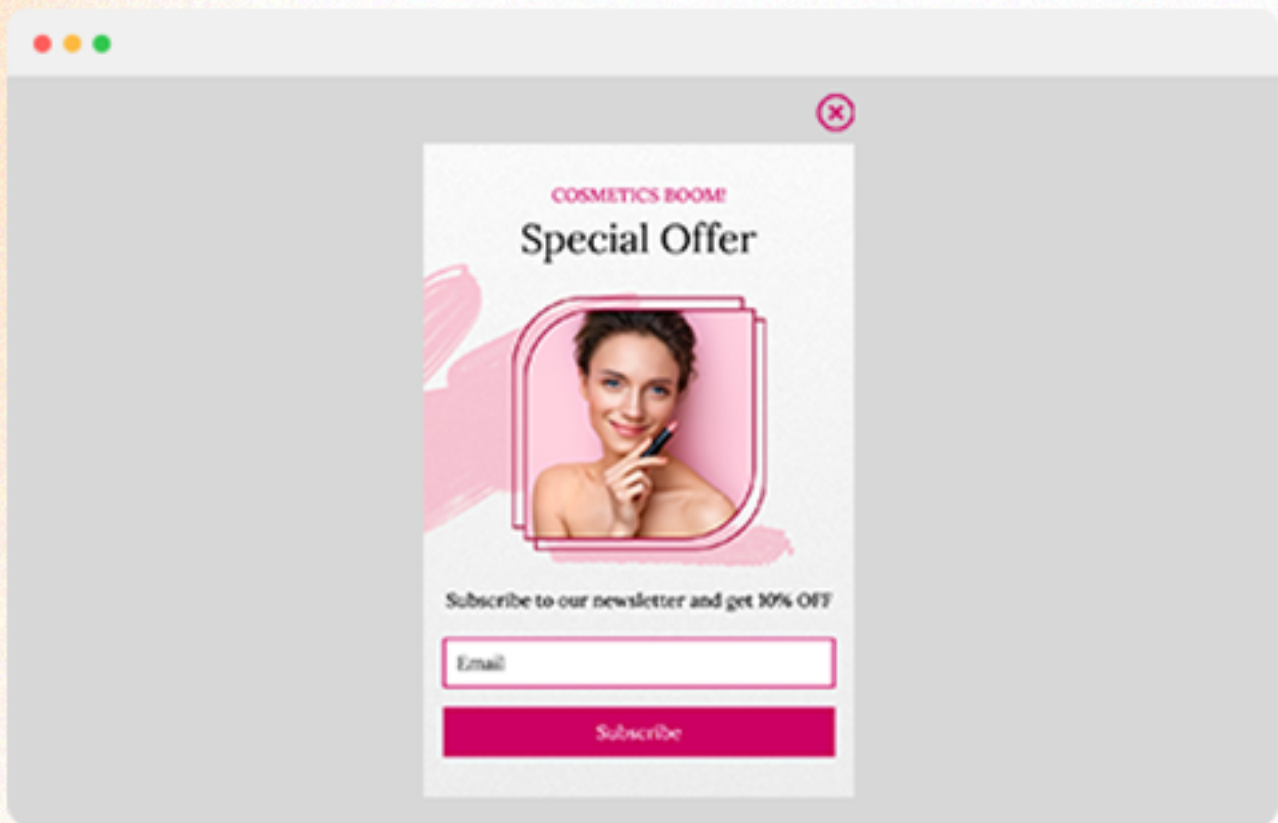
2 Interest Generation

The importance of first impressions is hard to underestimate. The fact that the first encounter affects people's perception of all the following repetitions was repeated countless times.

In 1997 Gregory J. Digirolamo & Douglas L. Hintzman have already obtained empirical evidence that first impressions are meaningful and lasting.

Therefore, if your heading fails to induce people to proceed (and this is a very feasible scenario because 8 out of 10 people read the headline, but only 2 of them will read the rest of the material), all your other marketing efforts are doomed.

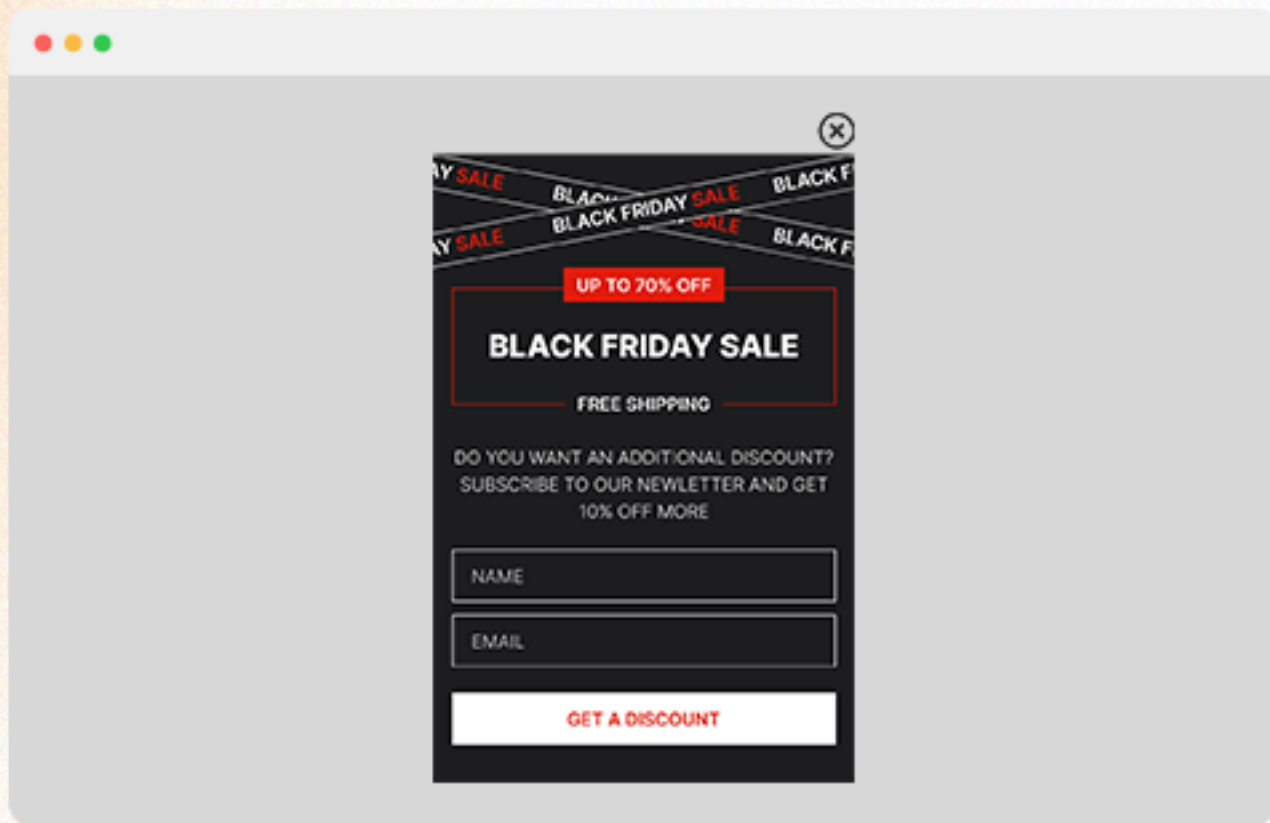
The Internet is flooded with generic or low-effort marketing content. Thus, the information from your headline should be not only digestible but also exciting or at least helpful.



3 Immediacy Satisfaction

People do not have an infinite number of resources to process the endless flow of data. Hence, human brains adapted to these circumstances by taking shortcuts and learning the news directly from the displayed headlines.

Now, as they browse your site or scroll through the incoming e-mails, they will gain enough info from the titles to learn that you are ready to launch a new product, start a seasonal sale, or present them with a personal offer.



4 Attention Direction

Sometimes you prefer to dedicate your message/story to a certain part of the broad topic, show different perspectives, or provide a more nuanced look at the subject. In this case, you can use your headline to shift the readers' attention from the concept to the specific aspect you want to put into the spotlight.

Examples

The Elusive Nature of
Ambiguous Headlines
(the whole phenomenon)

vs

7 Tips on How to Avoid
Obscurity in Your Headlines
(the particular aspect)

Conversational AI Surprises
Developers by Being a Fast
Learner (AI technologies
have a lot of potential)

vs

Chatbots Are Not an Adequate
Replacement for Your Customer
Service (but they are not just
there yet)

02

**Reasonable and
Emotional: Main
Approaches to
Creating Headlines**

Reasonable and Emotional: Main Approaches to Creating Headlines

Working on a perfect headline can be demanding. It might be hard to juggle so many requirements at once. However, you are not the first person to encounter this problem.

Hence, many marketing and copywriting professionals had the time to channel their experience in this area into helpful tips, advice, and manuals to guide those who do not know **how to write a good headline**.

4 U's Method

This approach is designed to transform your Unique Selling Proposition (USP) into a concise and attractive heading you can use for advertising your product everywhere, including popups, e-mails, webpages, and social media posts.

Generally, this technique can be applied to any piece of writing (it does not necessarily have to include all of the U's, but still).



4 U's stand for:



Usefulness

It describes how your product or service can be of use to the shopper. In what ways can it improve their lives or be beneficial for them? For instance, ready-to-be-cooked meals allow you to spend less time in the kitchen and pay attention to the activities that are more important or pleasurable.



Ultra specificity

Here, you need to elaborate on your proposition to make it sound more credible or serious. Let's say these meals are divided into portions that satisfy your daily nutrition needs precisely, so you do not have to throw anything away.



Uniqueness

Explain what makes you different from other retailers or service providers. For example, your delivery time slots are very flexible, and people do not need to wait the whole day for the courier to arrive.



Urgency

This part is not about scarcity marketing like special offers, limited editions, or soon to be gone products. It emphasizes the immediate relief or resolution that applying a product/service brings you. In this case, if you order right now, tomorrow you can already enjoy a hot meal after a day of hard work.

Feeling exhausted to cook a meal after a long day at work?

Order from us, and we will deliver the exact amount of everything you need for it to your doorstep at any given time. Now, let's see how this scheme works in practice.

Start building converting popups in Claspo without coding skills or design expertise. With its intuitive interface, everything will be done in minutes.

Usefulness

'Start building converting popups'

Ultra specificity

'without coding skills or design expertise'

Uniqueness

'With its intuitive interface'

Urgency

'will be done in minutes'

Plan a journey that is tailored to your exact needs by our genuinely caring team, and start the adventure of your dreams tomorrow

Usefulness

'Plan a journey'

Ultra specificity

'that is tailored to your exact needs'

Uniqueness

'by our genuinely caring team'

Urgency

'start the adventure of your dreams tomorrow'

Modernized Aristotle's Tactic

Ancient Greeks studied plenty of topics, and they were particularly interested in rhetoric. Thus, Aristotle invested a lot of time and effort into investigating what makes a speech inspiring and memorable.

It turned out, that people's sympathies are determined by three principles: ethos, pathos, and logos.

In English, they mean ethical, emotional, or logical appeal (as translated by the contemporary journalist Maria Konnikova):

- **I approve of it/It is credible.**
Before potential readers click the link, they check if the material is not promoting something immoral or shady.
If they sense fake news, scamming, or illegal deals, they would dismiss the content.
- **It resonates with me.**
This means that people can relate to the story on an emotional level.
- **I find it logical/It is in harmony with common sense.**
If it is hard to understand what the author initially planned to say or something just does not add up, users will not waste time trying to solve the mystery, they would call it nonsense and quit.

Naturally, all three of them matter. Yet, recent studies confirm that emotional imprint, whether it is fear, happiness, excitement, or even rage, is a powerful incentive.

Emotional triggers are more effective in terms of conversion than rational ones (31% vs. 16%).

In addition, if you succeed in emotionally connecting with your customers, they will stay with you longer (a 306% higher lifetime value) and will be more inclined to recommend you (75% vs. 45%).

Therefore, emotional marketing is a feasible strategy, especially when it comes to forming long-term relations with your customers.



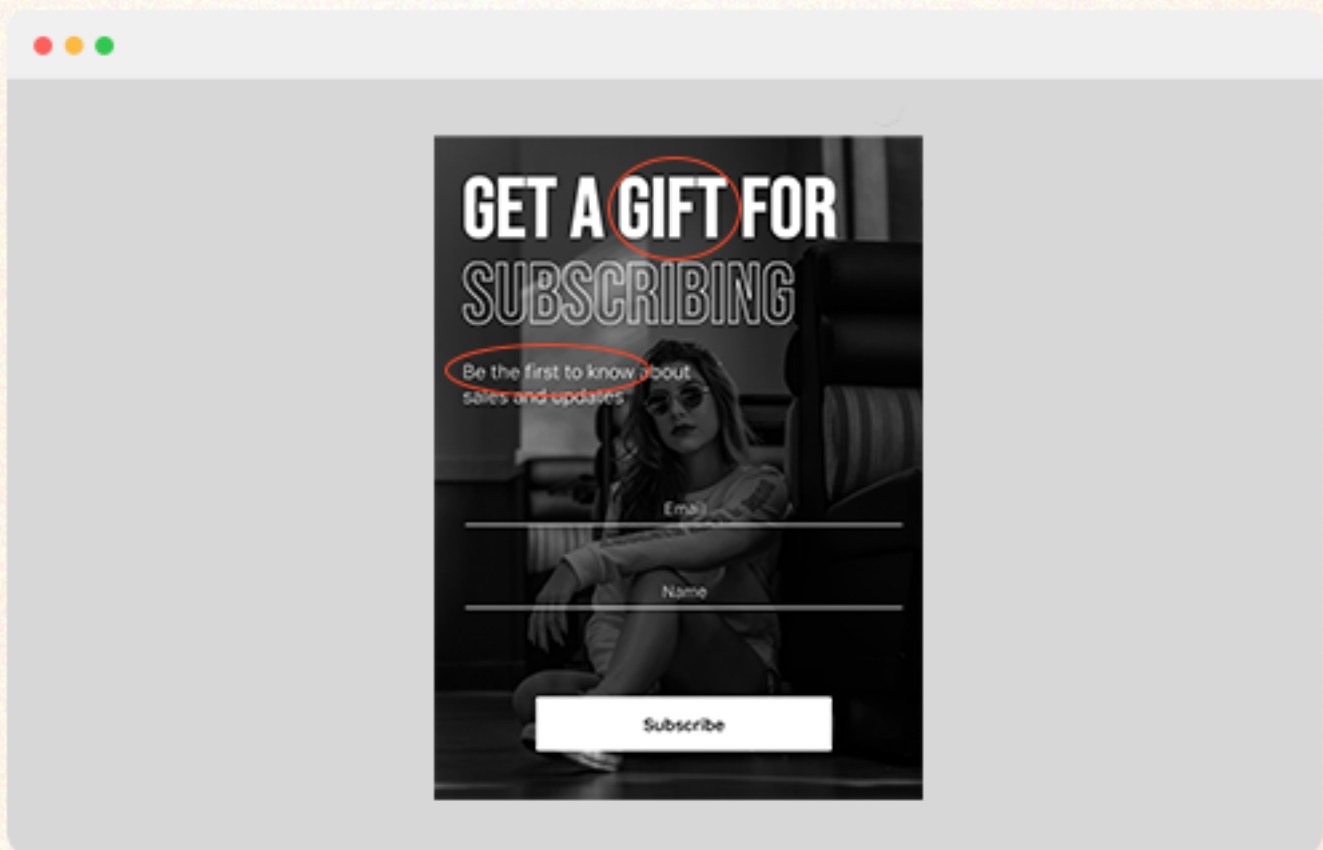
So, what buttons can retailers push to get the desirable reaction?

Of course, there is a multitude of them, but the most important triggers are:

1 Fear of missing out

EXAMPLES

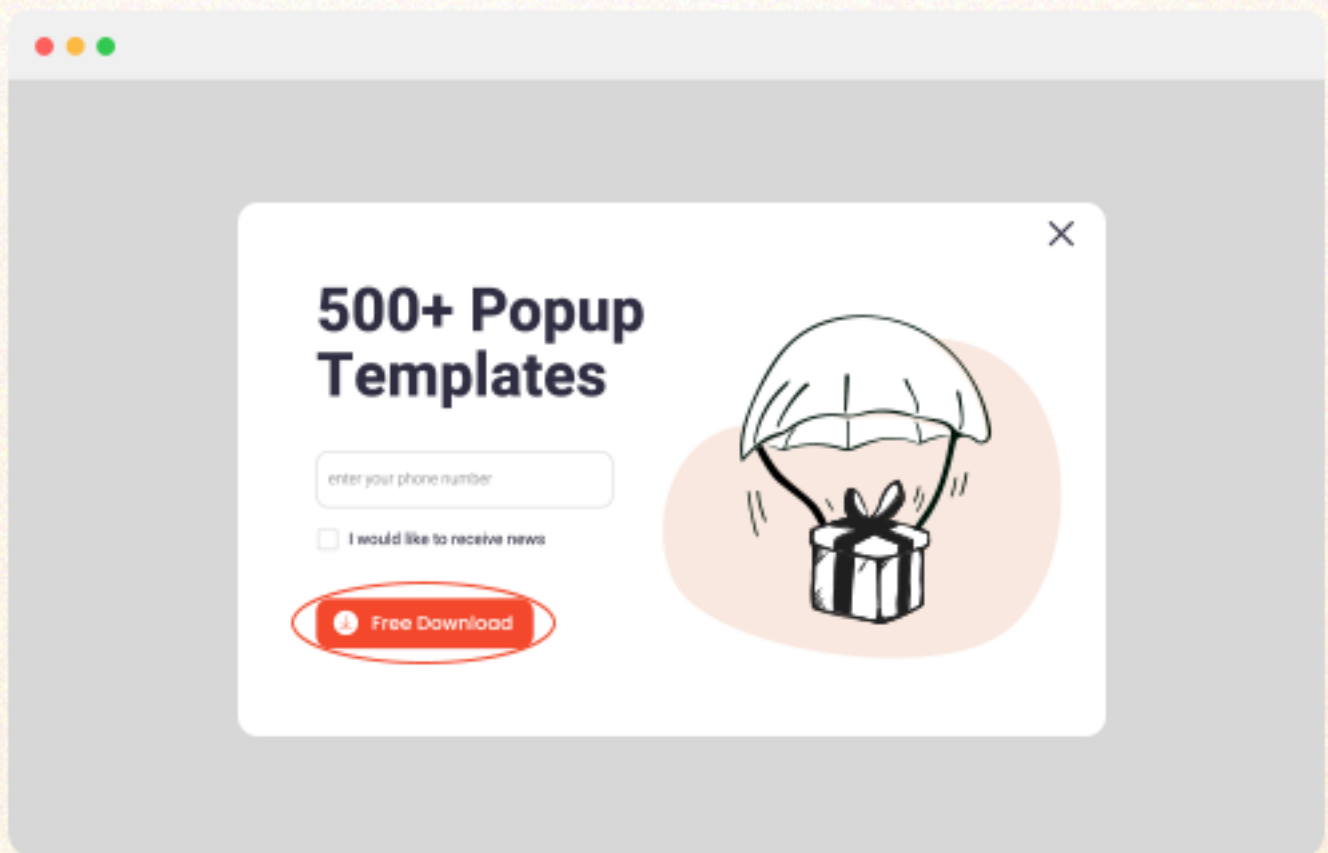
1. Hurry up to catch the last days of our special winter offer.
Cocoa with marshmallows is not that tasty in spring
2. We are too excited to introduce our new product.
Celebrate with us by being among the first people to buy it and get an unprecedented 25% discount



② The promise of happiness/excitement

EXAMPLES

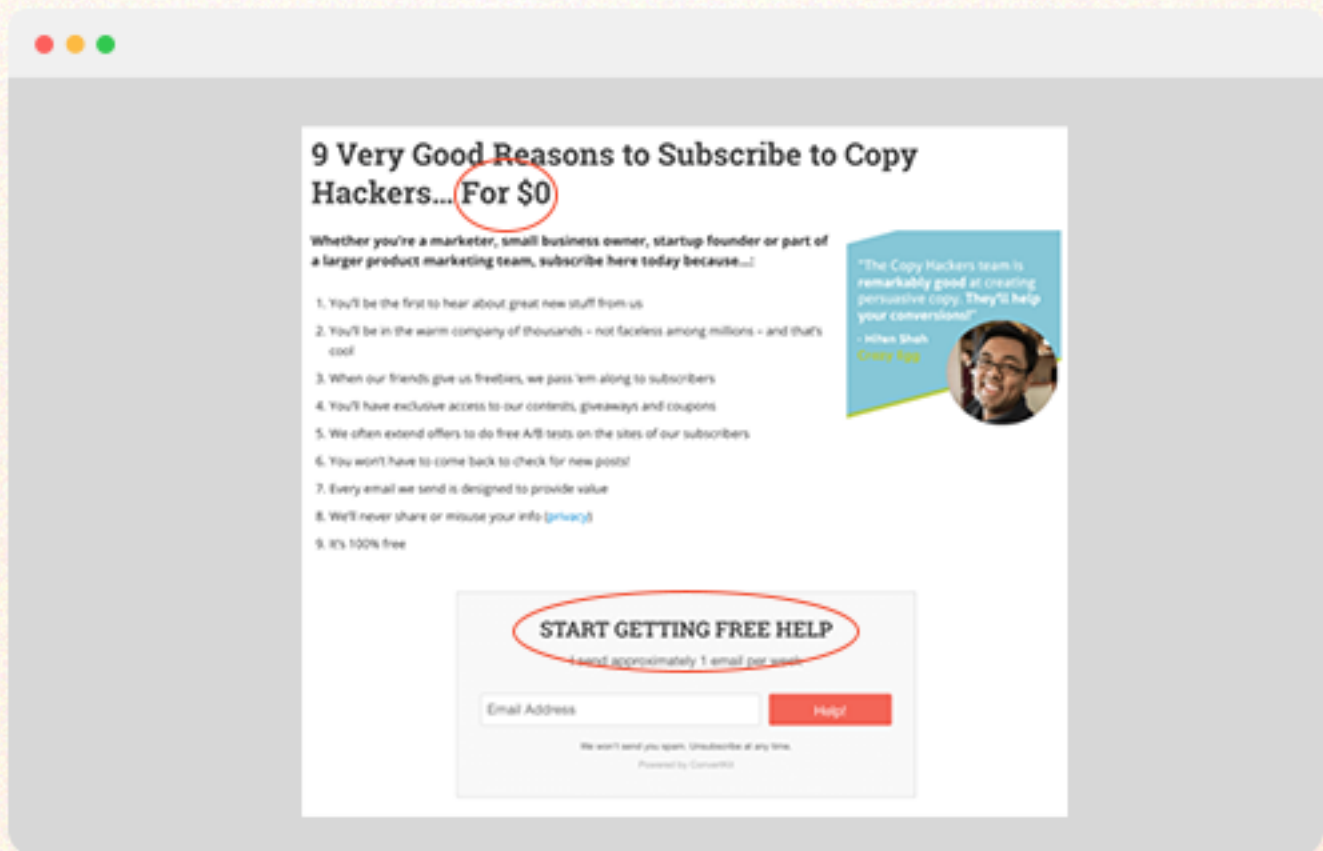
1. 5 Habits That Will Make Your Morning Routine Completely Stress Free
2. 9 Quiet Hideaways to Leave the Noisy City and Find Inner Peace



3 Disapproval of stereotypes and archaic patterns

EXAMPLES

1. Fight like a girl, run a business like a girl, or dance at a party like a girl. Dare to defy anything in the clothes from our new collection
2. Stop entering the leads' data manually, install the software that offers CRM integration.



④ Sense of belonging (especially to an elite club/community)

EXAMPLES

1. Psst, don't tell anyone, but this offer is for our most loyal customers only
2. Another day in the office with boring conversations and dull tasks? Join our cooking club and spice up your life today

No spam - just the good stuff

Plus, save 10% on our Discovery Scent Kit!

We don't send too many emails, but when we do it'll be stuff you'll actually want to read: sneak peeks, discounts, what's happening etc :)

First Name

Last Name

Enter your email address

JOIN THE CLUB

Overall, these tactics are not mutually exclusive. You can easily combine them to fit the type of heading you strive for.

There is an unlimited number of headlines, but everyone is busy these days, so let's cover the most popular one (according to Joshua Scacco & Ashley Muddiman):

- **Traditional (restrained).**

Plain, conventional, explicit.

11 ways cart abandonment is deteriorating your online store's performance

- **Creative.**

Attempts to elevate the level of readers' interest in the story by using humor, tropes, wit, or figures of speech in the heading.

Your shopping carts have abandonment issues?
Don't spend money on psychiatrists, use this software.

- **Sensational.**

Aims at making the content look more shocking, relevant, and extraordinary.

7 out of 10 online shopping carts get abandoned. Would this number even fit in your concrete store?

- **Tackling curiosity.**

It is like a murder mystery, but with headlines. Everyone wants to know 'Who Framed Roger Rabbit'.

Click, browse, like, put to cart, and...quit. What makes customers abandon their carts?

Regardless of the headline type you choose, there are common rules that will help you reach your audience:

- Check that your headline matches the content and resonates with the audience at the same time.

Remember that SEO-optimized does not always equal good. After all, you are trying to please real people, not some engines or machines.

- Make your visitors feel intelligent, but in a clever way.

Reading is a popular way to enrich your vocabulary, but if the readers have to consult the dictionary even before they open the link, they might decide that they are not cut out for this.

Hence, it would be wiser to simplify the complicated concepts and avoid using uncommon words (e.g., refrain from using 'pot-valor' as a fancy way of saying 'liquid courage').

10 Accidental Texts That
Would Put a Smile Even on
an Agelast's Face
(now you know how Greek
people call a gloomy, frowning
person who never smiles)

vs

10 Online
Conversations
That Would Make
a Cat Laugh



When you write a headline for your message/story, you have to amuse, comfort, or agitate your potential reader. Here are some of the things that can help you trigger these reactions:

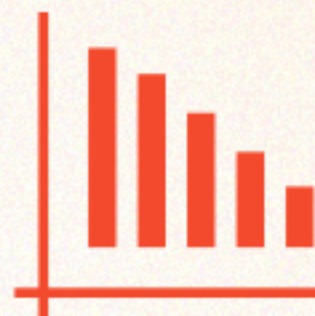
Numbers

They add credibility and clarity to your heading.

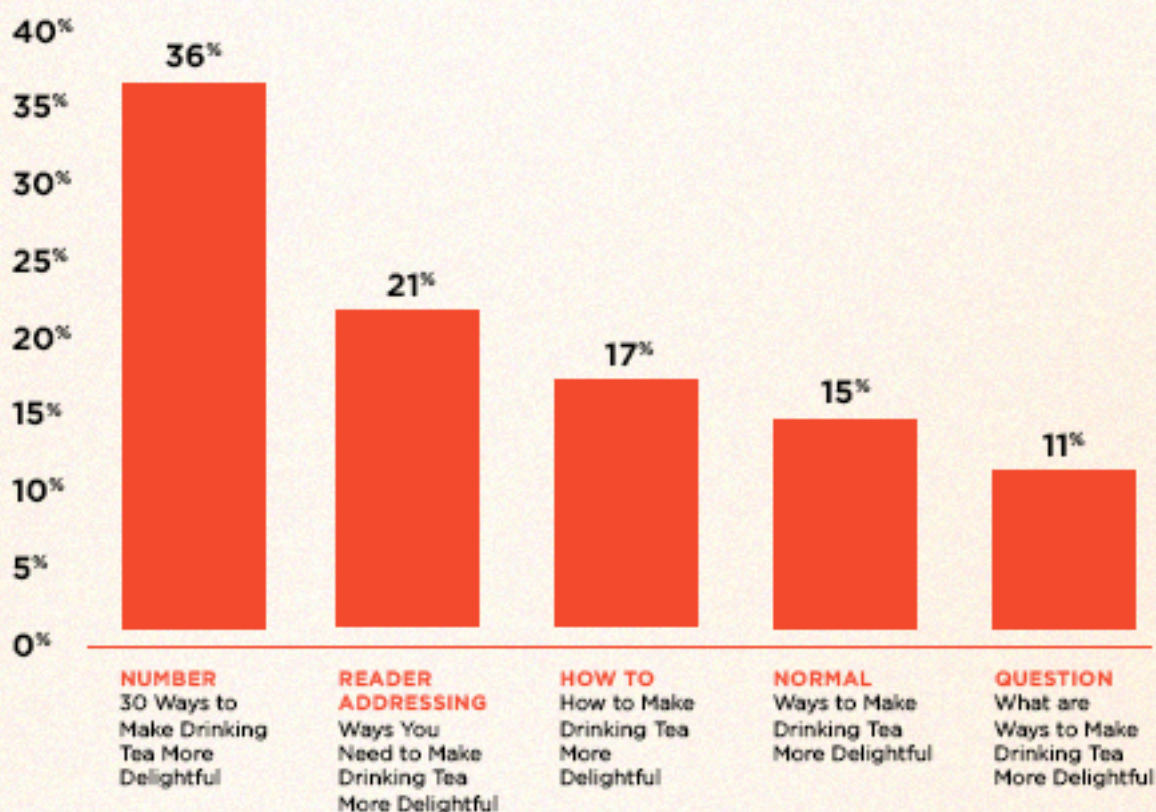
That is why 36% of users click on them.

30 Ways To Make Drinking Tea More Delightful

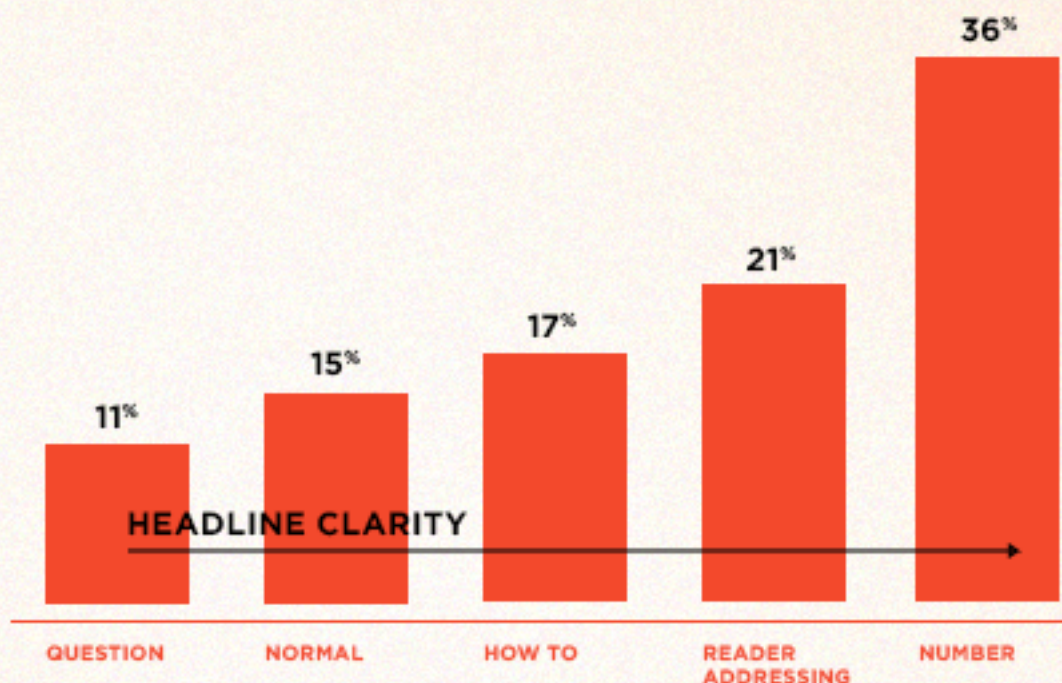
EXAMPLES



OVERALL HEADLINE PREFERENCES



HEADLINE PREFERENCES & CLARITY



Retrieved from Moz



Positive Emotions

The news about a panda bear giving birth, stories of rescued kittens, or heroic tales always spark joy.

People want to share these materials. If you do not have this type of content at your disposal, try to focus on something that brings people comfort, makes them smile, or helps them relax.

10 Recipes for the Delightful Cup of Tea After a Stressful Day

EXAMPLES

Negative information

Something that sparks resentment, anger, or sadness is surprisingly clickable and **stays in memory for a long time**.

This is why people closely follow the chronicles of devastating events like pandemic or war.

Of course, you do not have to be that dramatic, you just have to find something relatable that your target audience cares about.

You've Been Fooled. Chamomile Tea Does not Have a Soothing Effect

EXAMPLES



Similar viewpoint or attitude

Again, as social creatures, humans long to find like-minded people.

Naturally, you give your support to those who share your values because it is easier to form a bond with them.

5 O'clock Tea is the Most Delightful of the British Dining Traditions. Don't Forget to Pour Yourself a Cup of Our Finest Earl Grey This Afternoon

EXAMPLES



Puns and metaphors

Figures of speech help potential readers feel the mood of the message/article better.

It instigates their imagination. Plus, it indicates that the author exerted a bit more effort than others.

Thus, the rest of the material must be better as well.

Tea is Like a Hug in a Cup. Warm, Comforting, and Better When Shared.

EXAMPLES

A strong call to action

It empowers users and motivates them to change their lifestyle, attitude, behavior, or try something new.

When people crave something or are dissatisfied with the current state of affairs, it becomes easy to infect them with enthusiasm.

Do not Let Major Brands Determine Which Flavors Should Be Your Cup of Tea

EXAMPLES



03

The Complicated Relationships Between Headlines and Content

The Complicated Relationships Between Headlines and Content

It has already been established that headings largely impact the perception of the following content. That is why it is so tempting to turn them into flashy clickbait or shocking fake news.

However, with the intentionally confusing title, users can get confused and miss the idea of the whole piece. Furthermore, betraying the trust of your potential customers makes the possibility of future interactions highly doubtful.

So, let's see **how to make a headline** attention-grabbing, yet true to the storytelling at the same time.

Do Not Be Misleading

This is not a Hansel and Gretel situation when you lure the readers in with the delicious gingerbread house and then try to bake them in an oven. The dissonance between the article/message and its title can seriously backfire and ruin your strategy because it impedes readers' ability to perceive the content with clarity.

You do not want potential clients to get confused and fail to grasp what features of your product are unique or what approach they should use to increase sales. Essentially, if you cannot mix interesting with accuracy, it is better to opt for the latter.

▼ TODAY	2
☒ Why SEO is Dead Marketing Company	4:36 PM

VS

▼ TODAY	1
☒ LOL SEO Isn't Dead - We Just Wanted Higher Click - Though Rates Marketing Company	4:36 PM

Retrieved from Conductor

Deliver Your Promises

If you declare that you have 'the ultimate guide' make sure that your article covers the whole topic with all its nuances, pitfalls, and complexities. Otherwise, you just offered people candies and presented them with the empty wrapper.

There is no other word you can use to describe this situation but disappointing.

The Ultimate Guide to Snapchat Marketing

Home > The Ultimate Guide to Snapchat Marketing

We Use "Ultimate Guide" So You Can Take Us Seriously
(Please? Please Download This White Paper)



Home > We Use "Ultimate Guide" So You Can Take Us Seriously
(Please? Please Download This White Paper)

Retrieved from Conductor

Do Not Fake It

Fact-checking should be an inherent stage of any writing process.

If the information you gave in your story/message is fake, using your product or following your advice will be fruitless.

Of course, the disappointed customers will not become your clients again, and their feedback will not be flattering.

Restoring your reputation after you betrayed shoppers' trust can take ages and might call for a total rebranding.

Bring Something New to the Table

Whichever topic you take, there already will be dozens of generic articles dedicated to it. Almost all of them will be repeating the same statistics and drawing the same conclusions.

Are you sure users long for one more rearranged copy of the same content?

Most likely, they do not. Still, it does not mean that you need to rewrite the whole narrative, you just have to contribute and add something meaningful to the discourse.

35 Stats About Content Marketing That Will Shock You (#8 is Crazy!)

[Home](#) > 35 Stats About Content Marketing That Will Shock You (#8 is Crazy!)

Some Stats We Found That Are Rearranged and Slightly More Up-To-Date Than Others



[Home](#) > Some Stats We Found That Are Rearranged and Slightly More Up-To-Date Than Others

Sidenote:

To achieve the perfect harmony of all elements, not only headline and content should coincide with one another. Visual materials and design also have to reflect the tone of your message.

With Clasp's drag-and-drop editor, you can effortlessly manage everything from size and layout to color scheme and fonts.



04

Final Thoughts

Final Thoughts

Good headlines highlight the right aspects of the covered subject, are relatable, and attend to the audience's needs on both rational and emotional levels.

Make it credible, concise, helpful, and, of course, grammatically & factually correct. Plus, remember that readers crave sensational, intriguing, and original content, but it does not by any means justify click-baiting, fooling or intentionally misleading them, and spreading fake news.

Good luck!
The Claspoteam