

TURN A BROWSER INTO A BUYER – TOP TIPS FOR WRITING FOR THE WEB

- Avoid the 5 common ‘Our Story’ mistakes
- Checklist to develop a comfortable, easy-to-read writing style
- Identify the Unique Selling Point that sets your Hidden Britain apart

Why tell your story?

Our Story is, in effect, an ‘about us’. It’s your chance to paint a picture of your location for visitors: its sights, its character, its people.

What is the real value of such a page?

- It’s an invitation from the customer to talk about your Hidden Britain
- It can put a human face on your location, which might otherwise seem impersonal
- It can connect your human visitor with the human aspect of your location
- You can tell customers what you can do for them

Well written, it can turn a casual browser into a prospective visitor.

Read on to avoid the 5 most common ‘Our Story’ mistakes...

Mistake 1: Dull! You talk about your Hidden Britain; instead of about what it is like being there. What will visitors see, hear, smell, taste and do? Research shows that potential visitors are interested in the fine detail of a place, so dig deep.

Mistake 2: Lazy! You just copy and paste any old thing. Don’t just copy the location’s local history guide or visitor leaflet.

Mistake 3: Impersonal! You don’t put a human face on your Hidden Britain. Who are the people? What is your location’s personality? Display your personality in your writing. Visitors would surely like some element of welcome, fun and bonhomie? Don’t be afraid to write in the first person, it sounds friendlier.

Mistake 4: Ancient history! Don’t neglect the modern day story of your Hidden Britain. It’s a great way to highlight its good points in an interesting way. Ancient history is fine but visitors are going to see your location as it is today.

Mistake 5: No passion! You have no passion. What is your location passionate about? What is it proud of?

And 2 tips to improve your story even more...

Evidence! Emphasise your competence to serve visitors’ needs, and give them a comfortable, well-fed, entertaining and relaxing stay. If local businesses have Michelin stars, quality accreditations, AA ratings or have had a great write up, use this as evidence.

A theme! If your Hidden Britain project is themed, or is built on a particular platform, tell us. (Eco Tourism? Social Enterprise? Arts and crafts? Excellent local food?).

Follow this step-by-step style checklist to make sure you have produced a comfortable, easy-to-read piece of writing that works on the Web...

1. Write conversationally, as if you were speaking to a friend. Read your prose out loud to check. (The Web is one of the most casual mediums, formal language is out of place)

2. Now go back and edit your prose to use the fewest words, shortest words, and tightest paragraphs possible. Now your writing is concise and clear. (This helps your informal style, and helps skim readers spot information quickly)
3. Now go through the prose and break it down into bite-sized bits: one for each unique 'thought'.
4. Write a headline for each bite of text. (People skim on the Web, this will help them spot the information they want). Look at newspapers for ideas for good headlines. They often include: action verbs, playful or clever combinations or description.
5. Check again for lists or comparisons of information. Put any you find into a bulleted list or a table. (This is easier on the eye and quicker to take in).
6. Finally, carefully proof-read. The best way to do this is to print a hard copy and read through it line-by-line using a ruler.

Just remember, a well written 'Our Story' can turn the casual website browser into a visitor to your Hidden Britain.

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