

Season's Greetings

And a bit more too...



With AI Hidden Copywriter now into its fourth successful year and another festive season upon us, I'm writing to offer you season's greetings, thank you for your support and interest in the business, and wish you a successful year ahead. You'll also find a couple of recommendations that might come in useful during 2010. And, once again, I'm making a donation to the Alzheimer's Society instead of sending conventional greeting cards.

WHETHER I'M WRITING DIRECTLY for businesses or their clients, a common denominator is the challenge and variety of the work entrusted to me, the interesting people I meet and the value, good service and quality copywriting that I always strive to deliver. Being a freelancer specialising in technical copywriting and web/SEO copy has been an exciting journey into areas as diverse as aerospace, automotive parts, gas filtration, construction, and the world of health and beauty treatments. Variety doesn't come much greater than writing for organisations as different as local sole-traders and major brands such as The Metropolitan Police, Airbus and Toyota.

The power of SEO copy

FOR MOST OF THE ORGANISATIONS I write about, website and SEO copywriting is a key part of their communications. As we all address the challenge of 'credit crunch' and recession, more and more businesses recognise that, even if they are cutting other parts of their marketing spend, they must maintain (and improve) the effectiveness of their online presence. From SEO page copy to online articles and press releases, I believe a combination of traditional copywriting skills, an interest in search engine optimisation writing and knowing a good SEO consultant equips me well to write content that pleases human site visitors and search engines alike.

Pro bono copywriting

ONE OF THE YEAR'S CONSISTENT JOYS has been the pro bono copywriting I do for the North Devon Animal Ambulance (NDAA). People sometimes dismiss

animal charities as a distraction from the charitable needs of people. Yet, the more website copy, newsletter and article writing I do for the NDAA, the more I realise that behind every animal



welfare or rehoming story there's usually a positive impact on people. This realisation, and seeing the direct link between my writing and the charity's fundraising, has only added to the pleasure I get from helping such a hard-working team of volunteers. You may already have discovered the satisfaction of doing free work for a deserving cause; if not, it can be remarkably rewarding. They say that what goes around comes around – you might be surprised by what your efforts could do for your chosen beneficiary, as well as for your business.

Caution! – internet myth ahead

ON THE SUBJECT OF THINGS THAT 'GO AROUND', I've been struck by the number of alarmist email warnings that I get from well-intentioned, but often misinformed, senders. Whether it's the 'Dorset unmarked police car warning' or the 'reverse PIN number trick' in case you're forced to withdraw cash from an ATM under duress, you've probably received them too – perhaps even included in supposedly credible B2B e-newsletters. What do many of these emails have in common? Along with inaccuracies and the way they often give a misleading false sense of security, it's the way their dubious provenance can so easily be checked by dropping a small fragment of their text into a search engine or visiting one of the many myth-busting websites.



Mind your back

FROM MYTHS TO BACKS. If there's one thing that many of us have in common, it's the amount of time we spend at our desks – and the difference good office seating can make during a long working day. Last year, prompted by the encouragement of my



chiropractor, I took the plunge and invested in proper back care seating for the office. My research quickly led me to The Office Backcare Centre in Cheltenham, and a superb consultative sale by its owner Nigel Eldridge. After a year with our Håg ergonomic seats (Nigel stocks other ranges too) I'm delighted by a purchase that I wish I'd made years ago. For anyone considering new office seating I'd recommend calling Nigel on 01242 251779 or visiting his website at <http://theofficebackcarecentre.co.uk>

Focus on Gloucestershire

MY COPYWRITING IS INCREASINGLY focussed on supporting organisations that, like Nigel's, are based in or operate in Gloucestershire and the surrounding counties. For all the power of the internet, and the availability of remote-working tools, clients often seem to appreciate a local copywriter – based close enough to offer the response and personal service (I never 'sub out' writing) they need, when they need it.

Keeping track of time

AND FINALLY, A QUICK MENTION for an open source time tracking utility that I use every day. I've found the Java-based Hourglass application very useful, and very easy to use for logging time spent on writing jobs – you can download a copy at <http://sourceforge.net>



So that's about it for 2009. I hope you have an enjoyable Christmas and New Year and that next year is a successful one for you. And of course, when you need words to work for your business, either online or offline, remember to contact your Gloucestershire copywriter. □

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