

# What your writer needs from you, **in one page.**

A writer can write. A writer cannot know your prices, your permissions or your proof. Only you know those. **So this guide asks you 13 questions.** The answers go on the last page. Print that page, fill it in, and hand it over. Use it whether the writer is us, a freelancer, somebody in the office, or a chatbot.

**ONLY YOU**

Nobody else knows the answer

**RULE**

A Singapore rule sits behind it. See page 4

## 01 Start here

Three questions. Answer them before anything else.

- ☐ **ONLY YOU** **What question does this page answer?** Write it the way a customer would say it out loud. "What will a website cost me?" is a question. "Web design pricing" is a topic. If you cannot write the question, you do not have a page yet.
- ☐ **ONLY YOU** **What is the objective, and what do you want the reader to do?** Two answers, not one. The objective is what the page should achieve for the business. The action is the one thing that serves it: call, email, book, buy, download. Pick one. If the page shouts about five things, the reader hears none of them.
- ☐ **What do you think the reader already knows?** Your writer has to assume something. So tell them what. Then the page can say out loud what it is assuming, and add a link for anyone who does not know that bit yet.

**One question. One action. Name two or three of either, and this is not one page.** It is two or three pages squashed together, and a page with three jobs does all three badly. We will say so, and tell you to split it up. Better to hear that now than after you have paid somebody to write it.

## 02 Five things to leave out

|                                    |                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>How many words it should be</b> | Google says it has no favourite length. Ask for a word count and you get padding.                                              |
| <b>A word to keep repeating</b>    | Ask for the question, not the phrase. Cramming the same words in to climb the rankings is what Google calls spam.              |
| <b>The actual sentences</b>        | If the brief already contains the copy, you have hired a typist, not a writer.                                                 |
| <b>A made-up customer</b>          | "Sarah, 34, in marketing" is a guess that looks like research. Tell your writer about one real person who actually called you. |
| <b>A rival's page to copy</b>      | Copy their page and you answer their customer's question. Not yours.                                                           |

## 03 Money

This is where pages get stuck. Ours too. Every line below is a fix for something that really went wrong.

**Tell your writer everything. Then publish what you like.** Answer every money question below, even the ones you will never put on the page. Nothing here says you have to show a price. Here is why we ask anyway. We once published a year-two price of our own. It had been worked out from a care plan that tier never actually had, and the real figure was about a sixth of the one we printed.

- ☐ **ONLY YOU** **What is the price? If you will not show it, why not?** Your writer cannot guess a price, and should never try. You do not have to publish one. There are fair reasons to hold it back: bad timing, a legal reason, a competitor reason, or numbers you cannot work out yet. Write down which one it is. Then the page can say something honest instead of going quiet.
- ☐ **ONLY YOU** **What is in the price?** Not everything you do. Just what a buyer needs in order to compare you with the other quote on their desk. One of our own prices turned out to hide a list we had to ask about item by item.
- ☐ **RULE** **What is left out? Is GST already in the number?** If you charge GST, the price you show has to include it. The tax office names websites on its list, and says more than 100 GST-registered businesses have fallen foul of the price display rules in two years.
- ☐ **ONLY YOU** **How do people pay?** A deposit? In stages? All at once? A page that cannot say what the first payment is cannot tell a reader whether they can start.
- ☐ **ONLY YOU** **What does year two cost? And every year after?** You never have to publish this. Tell your writer anyway. A writer who knows can stay quiet about it. A writer who was never told can say something that clashes with it, without ever mentioning it.
- ☐ **RULE** **Every offer: until when, and how much?** We once wrote "unlimited revisions". We meant unlimited while we were still building. Our note recorded the offer and forgot the limit. If you use the word "guarantee", the advertising rules want the terms and the dates spelled out too.

## 04 Does anything run out?

|                                            |                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>A special price or a sale</b>           | Give the end date. An offer with no end date written down is still on sale next year, and nobody thinks to check. |
| <b>A badge or a certificate</b>            | Give the date it runs out. A badge goes up only while it is true, and comes down the day it stops being true.     |
| <b>A number you got from somebody else</b> | Give a date to check it again, and let the page say when it was last checked.                                     |

## 05 Proof

Your writer cannot make this up. This is the whole reason a brief exists.

**Google admits it cannot always tell.** Its own quality guide says: *"Our systems often can't tell from the words or images alone if something is exaggerated, incorrect, low quality, or otherwise unhelpful."* A confident sentence and a true sentence look the same. Only a real fact somebody can check tells them apart. Same for a reader.

- ☐ **ONLY YOU** **RULE** **What numbers can you prove? Where is the proof kept?** Singapore's advertising rules say you must be able to hand your proof over quickly if the advertising watchdog asks. That includes your own website. Answering this builds that folder before anybody asks for it.
- ☐ **ONLY YOU** **Which customers can be named on this page?** We treat permission as per page, not per customer. Name somebody on the wrong page and you have hinted they bought something they did not. Our Google Workspace pages, where we sell business email, name only the customers whose Workspace we really run. Others we name elsewhere stay off those pages.
- ☐ **ONLY YOU** **What badges or certificates do you hold? When do they run out?** A badge on a page is a promise with a date on it. Somebody should also be able to check it, usually on the list kept by whoever gave it to you.
- ☐ **No customers yet? What can you honestly show?** Show your method. Say exactly how you work and what you will actually do, in real detail. That is true, and it is yours. Never borrow proof from somebody else.

## 06 Pictures

|                                                        |                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Who supplies them, and where are they from?</b>     | Your own photos? Bought stock? Made by a computer? A photographer you hired? Each comes with different rules, and that changes what the page may say. |
| <b>What are you not allowed to do with them?</b>       | Bought and computer-made pictures usually cannot be sold on, or printed on something you sell. Say so now, not on launch day.                         |
| <b>Is a real person in the picture? Who asks them?</b> | Somebody has to ask, so say who.                                                                                                                      |
| <b>What is each picture there to do?</b>               | Every picture needs a line of text that does its job for a reader who cannot see it. Only you know what the picture is for.                           |

**If a picture does not match the words, your writer asks you. Never guesses.** That is the exact moment somebody invents a caption. We did it to ourselves. A draft of our own page said we take photographs. Nobody had said that. The pictures were bought or made by a computer. One question would have stopped it.

## 07 The Singapore rules, in short

This is general information, not legal advice. Rules change. Check the official pages before you rely on it.

### You show a price, and you charge GST

The price you show must already have GST in it. The tax office names websites on its own list. "Before GST", "excluding GST" and "subject to GST" are all on its do-not-write list. You may show both numbers if the bigger one comes first. The fine goes up to S\$5,000.

### You state a fact or a number

Keep the proof and be ready to hand it over quickly. The rules cover your own website, not just paid ads.

### You quote a customer

It has to be real, and about what really happened to them. A brilliant result must not be shown as the normal one.

### You compare yourself with a rival

Allowed. Compare the same things on both sides, and do not pick only the bits that flatter you.

### You use the word "guarantee"

Only if it gives the buyer more than the law already gives them. Spell out the terms, the fix, and how long it lasts.

### You say you are the best

Allowed as an opinion. It must read as an opinion, it must not mislead about a fact, and you must be able to say why you think it.

### You use a statistic

Do not dress it up to look stronger than the research behind it.

### You ask for somebody's details

Say what you want them for. Use them only for that. Do not ask for more than you need. And publish a way to contact you about data.

**Three things that get businesses in trouble.** The competition watchdog listed what it went after recently: promising an application would succeed, inventing a need for a package of treatments, and quality claims nobody had checked. A promised result, a made-up need, an unchecked claim. A rushed brief makes all three by accident. Complaints go to CASE, and complaints about advertising go to ASAS. **Health, money and slimming** carry extra rules that are not in this guide.

## 08 Limits, and how you will know it worked

- ☐ **ONLY YOU** **What must never appear on this page?** Every business has a list, and your writer cannot see it. Ours has a phone number that never appears as text.
- ☐ **ONLY YOU** **What is this page not about?** Saying no is your job, not the writer's. It is what stops a page swallowing every topic in the business. Our pricing page only exists because the page in front of it could not answer "what will it cost me".
- ☐ **What counts as working, and how will you count it?** Decide before the page is written, not after. Then make it countable. The reader has to land somewhere only this page sends them. A thank-you screen with something on it no other page shows. Or a word you ask people to mention.

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**THE PAGE**

**1. What question does this page answer?** Say it the way a customer would. Who is asking?

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**2. The objective, and the one thing you want the reader to do.** Call, email, book, buy, download. Pick one.

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**MONEY** Answer every line, even the ones you will not publish

**3. The price.** If you will not show it, why not?

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**4. What is in the price, and what is left out.** Is GST already in the number?

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**5. How people pay, and what year two costs.**

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**6. Every offer on this page: until when, and how much?**

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**PROOF**

**7. Numbers you can prove, and where the proof is kept.**

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**8. Customers who may be named on this page.** Badges you hold and when they run out. No customers yet? What you can honestly show instead.

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**PICTURES**

**9. Who supplies them, where they came from, and any limits on their use.** Who asks a real person in a photo?

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**10. What each picture is there to do.**

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**LIMITS, AND DONE**

**11. What must never appear on this page, and what it is not about.**

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**12. Does anything run out?** Give the end date, or a date to check it again.

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**13. What counts as working, and how you will count it.**

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**Want us to write it?** We write pages for small businesses in Singapore, priced per piece, with the rate published. The guide is free either way, and there is nothing to sign up for. [info@xsquare.com.sg](mailto:info@xsquare.com.sg) · [xsquare.com.sg/services/content-writing](https://xsquare.com.sg/services/content-writing)