

EBOOK SAMPLE

Copy Hackers Book 4: Buttons & Click-Worthy Calls to Action (Chapter 1)

Create Crystal Clear, Butt-Kicking Calls to Action

Every page should have at least one clear call to action, which we'll refer to as the "primary call to action" – the most important thing you want visitors to your site to do on that particular page.

Some pages will have secondary calls to action.

And throughout your page copy, you may have additional calls to action that are subordinate to the primary and secondary calls to action.

In a nutshell, here are the three levels of calls to action (C2A) you may have on a page:

1. Primary C2A
2. Secondary C2A
3. Other / Subordinate C2A

As a general rule, your primary C2A should be presented as a button. The web has built expectations in our site visitors, and one of those expectations is that *important actions go in buttons*. Our eyes scan for critical targets, like buttons; if you opt not to use a button for your primary call to action, you may unnecessarily confuse your site visitors.

The company responsible for leading the way in almost every design trend online in recent history, 37signals presents an exception to this rule. On the 37signals.com home page (as of Sept 2011), where visitors are presented with the 4 primary products in the 37signals suite,

there are no buttons whatsoever; rather, Jason Fried and company present their lineup using clear text links, like so:



What's wonderful about 37signals is that they openly test ideas before making sweeping changes to their site. So it is likely that they tested this text-link approach against an alternative, like a button, and found that it beat the alternative.

But will a text link perform better than a button for your startup? I recommend you test buttons versus text links to ensure you're making the right decision for your particular market, segment or visitor type.

When you veer from the norm, which is usually based on expectations and expectation-reinforcing, do so *intentionally* – not based on gut alone or 'copy-cattin'.

Your secondary C2A can be either a button or text link. If it is a button, you may wish to differentiate it from the primary C2A with design elements – like placement, size or color.

If it is a text link, I recommend you make the text larger than standard body copy; you do not want your secondary call to action to disappear on the page. See the examples at the end of this chapter.

And, finally, if I were writing your website, I would make all your 'other' calls to action text links. Subordinate calls to action tend to be navigational in nature; that is, they're meant to drive people into pages in your site that they may not otherwise have jumped into but that may solve a problem the primary and secondary C2A landing pages will not. See the examples at the end of this chapter.

The 2 Primary Types of Buttons

You've essentially got 2 choices:

1. **Single-line buttons:** buttons that have one short line of copy.
2. **Multi-line buttons:** buttons are single-lines on steroids. They retain the short line of copy that a single-line button has, but they boost that with supporting points that compel people to click. (See Chapter 5, which focuses on click triggers.)

Depending on the action you're trying to compel a visitor to take and the objections your visitor may have at that time, you'll have to choose single-line or multi-line.

The 5 Principles of Writing Clear, High-Performing Button Copy

Whichever type of button you end up using, here are 5 principles to guide you when writing a high-converting button:

1. Lead with a known, familiar verb
2. Use articles (e.g., 'the', 'a') or prepositions (e.g., 'for') if room allows, to avoid sounding robotic
3. Be specific with your word choice rather than generic
4. If you can add a benefit or point of value, do so
5. Consider the page you're driving to and the headline on that page (to avoid disjointed experiences)

If you can swing it without sounding aggressive, it can help to suggest instant gratification by tacking on words like "Today", "Now", "Instantly" or "In Seconds".

See the checklist at the end of this chapter and on CopyHackers.com.

Let's look at this example of a common single-line button: **"Sign Up for Free"**

- ✓ It leads with a known, familiar verb
- ✓ It uses a preposition, although it could just as easily be "Sign Up Free"
- ✓ It is specific
- ✓ Rather than just giving a command, it references a point of value: *free*
- ✓ Implies that the next page is the sign-up page, which the UX would have to follow through on

This is all very straightforward and obvious, I suppose. But like all copywriting, it *looks* obvious... until you sit down to write your own button and find yourself writing a button

that reads “See Options & Pricing” only to link to a product tour page, where no prices are listed.

Is it important to be specific? Yes. Marketing Experiments (July 28, 2011) conducted a series of tests that showed serious conversion lift when buttons went from rather generic in nature (e.g., “Sign Up Now”) to more specific (e.g., “Get Your Feed Now”).

If you can get specific, do.

One more thing: You can test this for yourself, but I’ve found that calls to action written in title case – that is, where all the words begin with a capital letter – are more eye-catching than those written in sentence case.

In the case of a multi-line button, I write the topmost line (the actual call to action) in title case and the supporting lines in sentence case.

Where Your Calls to Action Should Go on the Page

Your primary call to action should appear for the first time in the top 300 to 400 pixels of your page.

Depending on the length of your page, you will want to repeat your primary C2A at least one more time; the last appearance of your primary C2A should be on the bottom of the page. Yes, people can scroll back up to the top – but you want to make it as easy for people to buy as possible. If they’re convinced to buy at the bottom, give them the button they need (and want!) to click.

If you have a secondary C2A that supports the primary C2A – the way ‘learn more’ supports ‘buy now’ – then it should be positioned near the primary C2A. It normally appears to the right as a smaller or differently colored button or directly below as a text link.

Other C2As should appear in-line with the text that spurs them.

You don’t have to follow these rules. But if you choose a different route, do so intentionally.

What Your Calls to Action Should *Look Like*

I’ll never be able to stress enough the importance of hiring a skilled visual designer to make your copy pop and get your buttons noticed. In fact, I don’t take on work with a client

unless they have a designer available to treat the copy I write – and many other copywriters follow the same rule.

Design is critical.

If you have a graphic designer – or if you’re bootstrapping and trying to do everything yourself – use the following filters to determine if your buttons are good enough to get noticed and to refine existing buttons on your site. These filters will keep you on track so your personal feelings or time constraints don’t get in the way of high-converting buttons.

- Make the primary button big and bold – at least as large as your logo
- Don’t try to cramp several buttons in one space
- Use a strong, noticeable color, like green, orange or blue
- Be wary of red buttons, which can trigger a sense of alarm
- Add icons or other graphics to draw extra attention
- Use sufficient whitespace to separate the button from other page elements

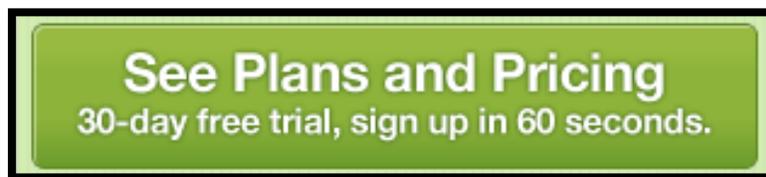
See the checklist at the end of this chapter and on **CopyHackers.com**.

Examples of Great Calls to Action

If you really want people to click on a button, give them something meaty to click on. These examples get nice and specific – and even add in a few images every now and then.

BackPackIt.com (Campfire by 37signals)

Use a multi-line button to give people a reason to click.



Copyblogger.com

Add a visual that drives home what they're trying to get.



KISSinsights.com

Get good and specific, even if your copy goes a little long.



Inkling.com

Repeat your brand name in the button if you're sending them somewhere else.



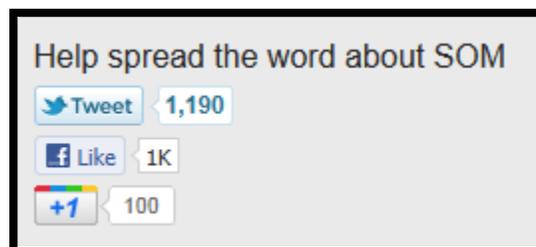
Latakoo.com

Put specific words in your button – and tap into the need for instant gratification.



Screencast-O-Matic.com

Put clear call-to-action copy around every action you want people to take.



Shopify.com

Couldn't be simpler or more specific than this one!



sosonlinebackup.com

What do you want to do? Start backing up.

So what do they do? Put those exact words in the button you should click.



visualwebsiteoptimizer.com

Another great example of specificity and instant gratification.



zendesk.com

What can I say? If you can squeeze a big ol' monk into your button, do it! ;)



Avoid Costly Mistakes by *Testing Your Calls to Action*

Although headlines are right up there on the list of copy elements to test, calls to action are just as critical because they are, of course, the single piece of content with which you need the majority of your visitors to *interact*. They need to be clicked.

You can quickly find out if a button or text link is effective by testing variations.

Calls to action are generally very easy to test (with free and low-cost testing tools, like Visual Website Optimizer). That's because they're so contained, compared to testing, say, *tone*. Swap one design for another, or swap copy on each design.

THE #1 WASTE OF TIME BUTTON TEST

I've been involved in my share of discussions about testing the color of a button. But unless you're dealing with a grey button (usability issue), button color tests rarely amount to anything. That's because color doesn't persuade. The color red doesn't overcome an objection more than the color green. So please, I beg you, don't test button color.

NEXT STEPS

~ Apply What You've Learned On Your Site Now ~

For the key landing pages on your site – your home page and/or your squeeze pages and PPC landing pages – complete the button questionnaire and design checklist (on the next 2 pages) in order to craft new button copy for the primary button on each page... and then design it up.

Once you have designed buttons, go ahead and test one button against the control on each of those high-traffic pages.

As with any test, do try to let it run until it's significant – and then be sure to document what you've learned, including the dates the test ran (in case seasonality was a factor) and the types of traffic that engaged with the test. When you know important points like that, you can roll out winners more intelligently across the right pages on your site.

WRITE YOUR BUTTON COPY

Print this page from your PDF copy, or visit CopyHackers.com for a full selection of printable worksheets, including this one.

1. What is the *specific* action your visitor is about to take? This should be a verb.

2. After clicking this button, what page will the user land on? *Consider* the headline of that landing page when crafting this call to action.

3. What will the visitor get out of clicking this button? This benefit should be uber-succinct because we want to get to the *visitor's* point fast.

Once you have completed all three of the above questions, you will have the core of your call to action button (or even text link). Remember to lead with the verb/action word. Your next step is to work the copy so that it sounds fluid rather than robotic.

BUTTON DESIGN CHECKLIST

Print this page from your PDF copy, or visit CopyHackers.com for a full selection of printable worksheets, including this one.

INSERT BUTTON IN QUESTION HERE:



- This is my primary call to action
- This button is at least as large as my logo (in the header)
- This button stands alone or is supported by a smaller button or text link
- This button uses a strong, noticeable color that is not red
- This button is not grey; it is made to look clickable, not disabled
- I've added a related icon to draw extra attention to the button
- I've added sufficient whitespace to separate this button from other elements on the page

Ready to Learn Even More About Writing Buttons That Get Clicked?

[Buy *Book 4* for just **\\$13.79** \(no tax!\) by clicking here](#)

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