



## 1. Crafting Effective Product Descriptions

Compelling product descriptions are a main ingredient to successfully selling your products online. Unfortunately, many business owners have difficulty composing concise and interesting product descriptions that also contain those key bits of information of most interest to the prospective buyer.

Online, you may have only 50 to 100 words to initially market your product to a visitor on a website. Using those few words, you have to market your product to a diverse group of customers, some not sure what they want, others not sure if you make what they need, and others who are very familiar with your product and in search of more specific details.

With an average viewing time of a minute or less for product webpages, it is imperative that you make your selling points quickly, efficiently, and effectively. The bonus for you as a business owner is that a well-crafted product description can serve you well in several different formats: on your website, in a brochure or catalog, and in other advertising formats.

You start by designing your product description from the customer's perspective, not from the producer's perspective. The producer is sometimes inclined to say:

**"This is the best product in the world and I love making it, so I know you'll love using it."**

That statement used one-fifth of the words customers will generally take the time to read and it conveys absolutely nothing of value to the customer who wants to know if you make the product she needs, at a price she is willing to pay, and if it will be delivered within the time frame required.

There are three main features of a great product description:

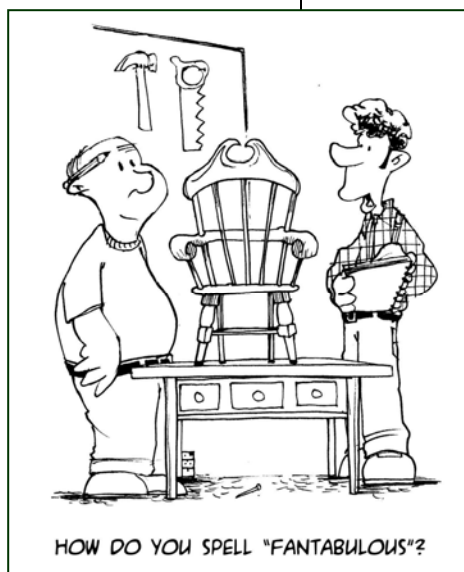
1. **Identifies specific product characteristics** of most interest to customers, such as price, size, material, color, weight, durability, etc.

2. **Includes words or phrases that customers type into search engines** when trying to find a product like yours. Search engines are crucial to attracting new customers to your website.
3. **Appeals to a wide range of customers** by addressing a variety of interests, allowing you to expand your customer base by using adjectives that attract different types of customers, for example: "stylish yet casual," "comfortable yet durable," "use as a Christmas or holiday decoration," "story card attached," etc.

"Key words" are the common denominator of all three. Make a list of the words a customer might use in a search engine to find your product. Include as many attributes as possible. Once you have a list of key words, test them by typing different combinations into a search engine. Do they bring up websites featuring products like yours? If so, take a close look at those webpages that landed near the top of the list. What other key words are they using, and should some of those be in your key word list?

Here is a 77-word product description that illustrates how key words can help search engines attract customers and how a compelling description can hold the customer's interest:

**"Our most popular chair contains no nails or screws to mar the natural beauty of the hardwood cherry. A clear, exterior oil finish allows the wood to age naturally, while protecting it from the weather. It's unique design allows this deck or patio furniture to fold flat for easy transport and storage. Headrests and seat cushions are sold separately in five vibrant colors. Stylish yet casual and made one at a time in New York's Adirondack region."**



Of utmost importance is that your product description keeps the focus on the product – not on you or your company – because most online customers are looking for a product. If they like your product and the price is right, then developing a relationship with an excellent company like yours is an added bonus, and that's good for you and good for business.

*Itsy Bitsy Web Untangler:* Search engines can direct customers to any page on your website, requiring that each page clearly convey the quality of your products and that you are a reputable and reliable producer.

Oh what a tangled web we weave... Sir Walter Scott, 1807

Tim Holmes of [Holmes & Associates](#) designs and evaluates community-based programs while managing [AdirondackCraft.com](#), an online catalog of 400 products made by 50 producers located in the Adirondack region of Upstate New York.

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