

# Catalog Success

## How Many Ways Can You Say 'Great'?

By Denise McGill

Make greater use of a thesaurus and you may be surprised

Do you find the same words cropping up repeatedly in your catalog copy? Words like "great," "perfect," "designed," "style" and "provide"? If so, one of the hazards you face is that your copy soon becomes predictable and can quickly lose consumer interest.

One way to beat predictable and potentially dull copy is by using the everyday thesaurus. That playful, fun-loving, teasing book of synonyms can give your copy a fresh look. If consumers can anticipate how your copy will read, they won't bother to finish it. Spice up a product description and give it an edge by avoiding having it sound like the product your competitor offers.

Take that extra step to replace words seen so often in copy. You might even surprise yourself and find a new approach or benefit to present about your product. For instance, look at the word list below; after each word are several alternatives (in italics) to give reliable standbys new life and deeper clarity.

- Great: *vast, grand, distinguished, impressive, remarkable, stately, fantastic;*
- Easy: *simple, effortless, uncomplicated, painless, straightforward;*
- Flair: *style, finesse, glamour, panache, vitality, taste;*
- Inspire: *encourage, energize, motivate, vitalize, waken;* and
- Walk: *stroll, stride, march, hike, skip, step, strut.*

In the example, "great" loses its generic and often overused meaning when you replace it with words such as "remarkable" or "distinguished." These words convey specific meanings and help define your products for the consumer.

Here are three quick thesaurus options:

1. The Web offers wonderful online thesauruses through a simple Google search. Wordsmyth, Roget and Merriam-Webster are just a few of the choices.

2. Microsoft Word provides a comprehensive thesaurus as well. Simply access the thesaurus through “Tools” on the toolbar and then select “Language.”
3. Finally, there's always the old-fashioned, hardback, print book to keep handy for quick reference at any time.

The thesaurus is an essential tool for every copywriter. It brings a creative, fresh look to product descriptions; helps provide an edge against competitors; and can generate a new arsenal of benefits and uses for your product blurbs.

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