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**Ranly on *Heads*
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I. Titles

- A. Four things to remember:
 - 1. Titles are read five times more than the body copy.
 - 2. The title is unquestionably the most important part of any story.
 - 3. Every writer must submit at least three titles.
 - 4. Titles are best created by brainstorming.
- B. Traditional (news) headlines
 - 1. Accurate – tell the news
 - 2. Strong – subject, verb, object
 - 3. No nonsense – avoid cleverness, lightness
- C. Creative (magazine) titles. Good titles make good poetry -- a poem says a great deal in a few words with great emotion or impact.
 - 1. Correct -- Never mislead.
 - 2. Clear -- if no summary/benefit/contents blurb (No one will read the story to find out what the title means).
Cryptic -- if summary/benefit/contents blurb
 - 3. Clever, catchy, cute. Use poetic devices:
 - a. Alliteration -- A little alliteration goes a long way in a title.
 - b. Rhyme -- Sometimes we should use rhymes.
 - c. Allusion, allegory, metaphor -- Play with readers; award their intelligence. Make their day.
 - d. Tweak -- Bend a truism; twist a cliché.
(Research demonstrates these devices get more attention and retention.)
 - 4. Compatible. Must have same mood, feeling as the article.
- D. Selling (advertising) titles (John Caples)
 - 1. "News headlines" – Introducing, Announcing, New, Now, At last, Use a date (July sale), Use news style
 - 2. "Headlines that deal with price" – Price in headline, Reduced price, Special merchandising offer,

Easy payment plan, Free offer, Offer information of value, Tell a story.

3. "Using key words in headlines" – How to, How, Why, Which, Who else, Wanted, This, Because, If, Advice, Testimony, Offer a test, Ask a question, Offer benefits through facts and figures.

E. Punctuating titles – capitalization

1. All caps
2. Upper and lower case (articles and prepositions)
3. First letter of first word and proper nouns

II. Blurbs

A. Four things to remember:

1. Blurbs increase the effectiveness of all heads
2. Readers must immediately see the benefit.
3. Readers do not begin at the beginning.
4. Blurbs help busy readers cheat.

B. Two types of blurbs

1. The external blurb -- the summary/benefit/contents blurb. May be same as on table of contents.
2. The internal blurb – breaks up copy
Purpose -- to coax, tease readers into the copy.

C. Four guidelines for writing blurbs:

1. Usually, write sentences, and use periods.
2. If you have more than one internal blurb, either make them all sentences, or make them all fragments.
3. Using quotes (pullquotes) is fine, especially for internal quotes. Attribute them with a dash.
Use single quote marks.
4. Keep them short, and avoid hyphenations.

III. Captions

A. Three things to remember:

1. Every picture needs a caption.
2. Captions are read five times more than the copy.
3. Write the captions as if no one is going to read the copy.

B. Two purposes of captions:

1. Complement the photos. Say what the photo does not say. Give useful information. Demand more information from the photographers.

2. Connect the photos to the story. The good caption says "see story" without saying it.
- C. 10 guidelines for writing captions:
1. Write sentences. Occasionally a fragment will do. Don't skip articles.
 2. Use transitive verbs in the active voice and present tense.
 3. Know the size of the photo. Make captions a minimum of two lines, optimum three lines, maximum four lines.
 4. Make the last line count. Make it at least three-quarters of the line. Avoid widows.
 5. Write the most complete captions under the largest or dominant photo.
 6. Place the caption under the photo.
 7. Avoid group captions. Avoid clockwise.
 8. Use legible type, preferably bold face, sans serif, at least 10 point.
 9. Give simple, consistent directions. "From left" works fine -- written out and without "to right."
 10. Have fun. Bright and entertaining captions communicate better.

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