

## **Don't Summon The Flies**

### **Battle of The Flies**

It all started the afternoon of a fairly normal day.

When my mother had told me my brother called to tell her he'd burned an omelet and was having trouble with flies in the house I assumed it would be a typical burnt food smell attracting a few more flies than usual.

Oh, how wrong I was.

As soon as we walked into the house, it hit us: an overpowering scent that was enough to make your eyes water. It was like you had taken an egg that had been rotting for a week, and then charred it to try and make the stench go away but instead made it ten times worse. I have burned many eggs in my lifetime, but to this day I'm not sure how my brother managed that particular aroma.

There were also more than a few extra flies in the house. The windows were COVERED with them almost like a lace curtain only made out of flies. They came through the doors, windows, some were even crawling out of the plug-in holes in the wall outlets.

For a brief moment, I wondered if my brother had stumbled upon a new way to unleash a plague upon humanity. I could already see it: tanks shooting burnt food at enemy armies and them being immediately swarmed with flies. Sadly my thoughts of burnt egg warfare were cut off by a fly swatter being placed into my hands as I was enlisted for fly killing.

### **The Battle Comes to You**

This is an interesting story and maybe it even got a few readers to laugh, but why am I telling it to you?

Well, apart from it being the first thing that popped into my head when I sat down to write, we can take an important lesson from this cooking catastrophe: the lesson of overcooked copy.

There's a fine balance in web writing, between too much and too little. You need to have enough keywords sprinkled throughout your copy or you won't show up in search results, but if you have too many (and yes, you should know by now that you can have too many keywords) your copy won't flow, making it a turn off for the impatient and busy reader. Even worse, your site might not get seen at all because Google will flag it for unethical SEO.

As someone who deals with this stuff on a daily basis, I know how easy it is to have 'overcooked' or 'undercooked' copy. I can remember several instances of banging my head in frustration because what I had written was clearly undercooked, but what I found is that just like food, undercooked and overcooked copy can be resolved with a little time management.

If an egg is undercooked what do you do? You leave it on the stove a little longer. If your copy is undercooked you take a break and come back to it later and look at it from a new angle you couldn't see before.

When you're working with a team of other people you might not have the luxury to do this but you can probably still take a short "brain break" every now and then even if it's only for five minutes

If an egg is overcooked what do you do? You toss it out so it won't stink up the house and you start over, but that doesn't mean you should immediately throw out your overcooked copy.

This kind of copy usually has one of two causes...

1. Trying too hard to emphasize your worth to the customer.
2. Overthinking your SEO.

Don't spend quite so much time on this bit of copy. Cut the parts that aren't necessary and piece together the parts that will draw in your ideal customers, from that point it's fairly easy to make those pieces into workable copy. You might not get everything picture perfect, but you will keep your copy from stinking.

And also make sure you don't leave anything unattended on the stove, it will save you several hours of fly killing.