Bullets, brevity and no braggadocio

Web marketing in an era of scanners

Buyers are gathering their own information, which makes your online marketing message more important than ever. In order to command an online reader's attention, you have to first understand how they read. The answer, of course, is they are not reading at all, says Eddie Shleyner, a content marketing specialist at WorkForce Software and the founder of VeryGoodCopy.com.

In a recent blog post for HubSpot, Shleyner shares insights from web usability guru Jakob Nielsen, whose research indicates that only 16 percent of people online read word-by-word. Most are scanners, picking text apart for the bits that are valuable to them.

Knowing that, there are several ways you can write to make the process easier for people, ensuring that your message is entirely received:

- **Be concise.** Don't underestimate your prospects' imagination and intelligence by providing too much information. Steer clear of repeating information and loading up on adverbs.

- **Write for scanners.** Scannable web pages include highlighting, subheads, bullets, white space and single-point paragraphs.

- **Use objective language.** Don't boast without proof. Don't exaggerate.