**Questions to Improve Your Spec Ads:**

**1. What problem am I trying to solve for the brand with this ad? Have I solved it?**

You **need to be able to explain your ad to a creative director in relation to the objective** you set up for yourself.

For example, you might create an ad based on the premise of “Dodge wants to find a way to gear its Dart car to a middle-aged female market.” Then your ad goes about solving this problem.

So, has your ad solved your “client’s” problem?

**2. What words describe this brand’s voice? Can the same words be used to describe the voice in my copy?**

If applicable, **take a look at some of the company’s current, real ad campaigns**. What does their brand sound like? How would you describe their voice? Then, take a look at your ad. Is the brand voice the same? If not, rewrite!

If you made up a company, look back over your notes about that made up company’s brand voice and style. Remember, even if it’s not a real company, it still has to have a real (and consistent!) brand style.

**3. Who is the target audience? Have I written in a voice and chosen words that are appropriate for them?**

**Who is the target of your ad?** Does your copy make sense when you keep them in mind? Will it sound right to them? Even the best ad won’t be effective if it doesn’t speak to the target audience in a way they can relate to.

Remember, too, that even made up companies and made up products still need to have a target audience in the real world. Who are they? Are you talking to them effectively?

**4. Have I clearly conveyed the benefit to the consumer? If applicable, is there any way to make it more emotionally resonant?**

If you can’t convey why a product or service will benefit someone, why would they ever buy it? Take a good, hard look at your ad. Is the benefit there? Is it clear? And is it compelling? Then also, could it be more compelling? Could you **get into the deep benefit to make it resonate even a bit more** with the reader (and, as such, make them even more likely to purchase?)

The benefit needs to be the number one thing your ad conveys. **Never sacrifice the benefit for a clever line**, no matter how much you love it.

**5. Is there anything I can cut? Anything that isn’t absolutely necessary to conveying the message and the brand?**

**Extra words only get in the way of getting your message across** and increase the risk that your target audience won’t bother to read it. Be ruthless as you read through your copy.

If a piece of copy doesn’t communicate a benefit, communicate a crucial and relevant feature or serve to support the brand in some way, it has no business being in your ad. And, **even if it does one of these, it still might not be appropriate in your ad.** If you’re writing a banner ad, you won’t have room for all of these things. If you’re writing a very direct and promotional email, it’s probably not the place to have a ton of branding.

**Is there anything you can/should cut? If so, do it.**