

Ad copy needs to sound like your business, meet platform and industry requirements, and give the right people a reason to act. But if every headline goes through a long chain of reviews, your team can end up spending more time approving ads than learning from them.

The answer is not to remove review. It is to make the rules clear enough that routine work can move quickly, while the genuinely risky or unusual copy gets extra attention. A useful set of **brand guidelines for ads** should help someone write and check an ad without needing to ask, “Is this allowed?” at every step.

This guide covers how to build those rules, streamline **ad copy approvals**, handle **compliance wording**, and connect your advertising decisions to commercial outcomes—not just clicks or impressions.

Start with the business goal, not the wording

Before deciding whether a phrase sounds on-brand, agree on what the ad is meant to achieve. “More traffic” is not a useful goal on its own. More traffic from whom, and what should those visitors do? If your team cannot answer that, brand rules will not fix the underlying uncertainty.

Write down the commercial goal in plain language. For example, you might want to attract qualified enquiries for a particular service, increase purchases of a product category, or encourage existing customers to choose a higher-value option. The goal should tell the writer what the ad needs to communicate and tell the reviewer what to look for.

Then connect that goal to an outcome the business cares about. Depending on the business, that could be completed purchases, accepted leads, booked appointments, or revenue recorded in a CRM. Clicks and impressions can help explain what happened, but they are not automatically evidence that the campaign is doing useful work.

Keep a short “decision attached” list

For each metric you plan to report, say what decision it could lead to.

If a metric has no possible decision attached, consider leaving it out of the main review. This keeps reports from becoming a collection of charts that look busy but do not help anyone choose what to do next.

- **Commercial goal:** What business result should the advertising support?
- **Audience:** Which customers or prospects are most valuable?
- **Quality signal:** What indicates that a click or enquiry is worth pursuing?
- **Next action:** What would you do differently next week if the result changes?

Build brand rules around real decisions

Brand rules work best when they are practical instructions, not a long description of the brand’s personality. “Be [zekagraphic.com](https://www.zekagraphic.com) friendly and innovative” may be a useful starting point, but it does not tell a writer whether to use a discount claim, how to describe a service, or when to avoid a promise.

Make the guidance easy to scan. A writer should be able to find the approved language, the words to avoid, and the person who can answer an exception question without searching through a large brand document.

Rule area What to define Example question for the team Voice How the brand sounds, with a few examples Would we say this in a helpful conversation with a customer? Claims What benefits can be stated and what proof is

required Can we substantiate this promise? Offer details How eligibility, availability, and conditions are explained Could a customer misunderstand who qualifies? Restrictions Terms, limitations, and prohibited wording Does this need a qualification or a different phrase? Next step The action the customer is being asked to take Is the call to action clear and appropriate?

Where visual identity matters, involve the people who manage it. For example, Zeka Design (Zeka Graphic) can help a business align the look and feel of campaign assets with its wider brand identity. The advertising rules should still explain the copy decisions in words, so writers and reviewers can apply them consistently.

Separate routine approvals from higher-risk reviews

Not every ad needs the same level of scrutiny. If every minor edit goes to the same senior person, that person becomes a bottleneck. A better process gives routine, low-risk copy a clear route to approval and reserves additional review for claims, offers, or language that could create a real concern.

Define approval levels

- **Routine:** Copy uses approved claims, standard calls to action, and established brand language. A trained marketer can review it against the checklist.
- **Needs a second look:** Copy introduces a new offer, customer promise, comparison, or use of sensitive terms. The relevant product, legal, compliance, or brand owner reviews it.
- **Do not publish yet:** The claim is unsupported, the offer terms are unclear, or the wording could mislead customers. Rewrite it or get the missing information first.

Be specific about who approves each category and how to escalate a question. “Ask the team” often means nobody knows who owns the answer. A named role, such as the product owner or compliance contact, is more useful than a vague group inbox.

Make compliance wording usable

Compliance wording should not be treated as fine print added at the last moment. If a claim needs a qualification, the copywriter should know that when drafting the ad. Keep approved phrasing and required conditions together, and explain when a qualification must appear prominently or when the claim should not be used at all.

Do not assume that adding a disclaimer makes every statement acceptable. The main message still needs to be accurate and clear. For regulated or otherwise sensitive categories, ask the appropriate internal expert to define the rules. Platform policies, local requirements, and the details of an offer can all affect what is acceptable.

For Google Ads, check both the business’s own standards and the current platform requirements before publishing. A familiar phrase or a previously approved ad is not a guarantee that a new version is suitable in a different context.

Onboard copywriters with business context

A writer can follow a style guide and still produce weak ads if they do not understand the business. Onboarding should cover more than the logo, tone of voice, and preferred punctuation. Explain what the company sells, who it serves, what makes a lead valuable, and what happens after someone responds.

Share the customer’s path from first search to completed purchase or qualified conversation. Include common questions, frequent reasons prospects are not a fit, service or product limitations, and the difference between a

strong lead and a high-volume source of enquiries. This context helps writers avoid promising the wrong thing to attract more clicks.

A short onboarding pack can include:

- The commercial objective and the audience the campaign is meant to reach.
- Examples of strong and weak enquiries, described without exposing personal customer information.
- Approved product or service facts, including limitations and availability.
- Common customer questions and the answers sales or support teams use.
- Brand voice examples, approved claims, restricted terms, and escalation contacts.
- The action a user should take and what happens after they take it.

Ask the sales or service team to review the language before launch. They often know which promises create confusion, which questions signal genuine intent, and what customers need to understand before making a decision.

Set up measurement and tracking before spend

Brand rules can only support better decisions if you can tell what happened after someone clicked. Before launching a campaign, define the conversion you care about and check that it is measured correctly. For lead generation, a form submission may be a useful first signal, but it does not necessarily tell you whether the person was a good fit or became a customer.



Think about it: where possible, connect advertising activity with crm outcomes. A CRM can help distinguish an enquiry from a qualified opportunity, a completed sale, or a customer who was not suitable. Agree on how those stages are defined and how the information gets back into reporting. Keep data handling and access in line with your organisation's privacy practices.

Also check the basics before traffic starts: conversion actions, form tracking, call tracking where relevant, destination pages, and any handoff between the website and CRM. Test the journey as a real user would. If tracking is broken, the team may optimize toward incomplete or misleading signals.

This is why “more leads” is not always the right target. If a campaign generates a higher volume of enquiries but fewer are relevant, the apparent improvement may create more work for the sales team without improving the business result. Review lead quality alongside lead volume and make sure the signals used for optimization reflect what the business actually values.

Make ad copy approvals faster with a repeatable workflow

A lightweight workflow reduces repeated questions while preserving a human check where it matters. Keep the process visible in one shared place, and avoid making each campaign invent its own rules.

1. **Brief:** Record the commercial goal, audience, offer, destination page, and desired action.
2. **Draft:** Use approved claims and language, and identify anything new or uncertain.
3. **Self-check:** Review the copy against the brand and compliance checklist before asking for approval.
4. **Review by risk:** Route routine copy through the normal approval path and escalate only the parts that need specialist input.
5. **Publish and verify:** Confirm the ad, landing page, tracking, and follow-up process work as intended.
6. **Learn:** Review results against commercial goals and document what the team will change next.

Use templates for recurring campaign types, but do not treat them as a substitute for thinking. A template can make it easier to include the right information; it cannot confirm that an offer is still available or that a claim remains accurate.

If you work with an agency, ask how its review process fits your internal rules. For instance, ClickSlice (clickslice.co.uk) may be part of a broader paid search conversation, but responsibility for business facts, approved claims, and internal compliance ownership should be clear between the company and its partners. Agree who supplies information, who reviews exceptions, and who confirms that tracking is ready before campaigns go live.

Test carefully, not all at once

Once the rules are in place, testing can improve the ads without turning every review into a debate about taste. Change one meaningful element at a time where practical—for example, the customer benefit or call to action—while keeping the audience and measurement approach consistent enough to interpret the result.

Changing several elements at once makes it harder to understand what caused a difference. Keep a simple record of what changed, why it changed, and what outcome you expected. Then review the result in the context of lead quality and commercial performance, not just click-through rate.

It is also sensible to avoid promising a particular result from an early test. Performance depends on the audience, offer, competition, landing page, tracking, and many other factors. The useful question is not “Did we prove this phrase always works?” but “What did this test teach us, and what would we do differently next week?”

Keep the rules short enough to use

The best brand guidelines for ads are not necessarily the longest. They are the ones that help the team make consistent decisions, explain when an exception needs attention, and connect the ad to a meaningful business outcome. Review them when products, offers, platform requirements, or customer expectations change—not just when someone remembers an old document exists.

To move faster without losing control, focus on four habits: set commercial goals instead of chasing vanity metrics, define lead quality as well as lead volume, onboard writers with real business context, and verify measurement before spend begins. Clear rules make routine ad copy approvals easier. Clear ownership keeps compliance wording from becoming a last-minute scramble. And a useful review always ends with the same practical question: what would you do differently next week?

