

Analysis of Poker Competition Copy: The Welcome Bonus

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Introduction: Why the Welcome Bonus?

What part of our poker competitors' offering to analyse? The Welcome Bonus, because:

- They don't vary much from brand to brand
- Every brand in the industry offers one
- Both of the above mean there may be more of a reliance on the copy used

What are we analysing here?

Yes, the copy. But what aspects of the copy exactly?

- **Tone**: formal, funny, boring, etc.
- **Clarity**: complicated, too sparse on details, etc.
- **Personality**: how has the brand positioned itself?
- **Layout**: bullet points, huge paragraphs, etc.
- **CTA**: is it clear what the reader has to do?

I've chosen to analyse the short and long promotion page copy in each case.

Who to analyse?

I thought it would be interesting to choose the top 5 poker brands in the industry... but the top 5 according to who?

I decided to take 4 independent poker review sites' rankings...

www.reviewpokerrooms.com

www.pokerlistings.com

www.thepokerfish.com

www.toppoker.org

...and then took an average of their scores for each brand, resulting in my top 5...

The Top Five

1. PokerStars
2. Titan Poker
3. Full Tilt Poker
4. PartyPoker.com
5. Everest Poker

PokerStars – short text



PokerStars Bonuses and Promotions

PokerStars is offering you an incredible 100% bonus up to a total of \$600 on your first three deposits. Your two further deposits can be up to 90 days after your first deposit. It's the perfect way to boost your bankroll, and all you have to do to release the bonus is keep playing at PokerStars. Don't forget that we also offer reload bonuses for existing players at different times throughout the year. Go to the Poker Bonus page to see the latest bonus offers available.

First impressions? “A \$600 first deposit bonus, cool! Wait a minute...”

After reading the short text itself, we learn that it isn't really what the image copy says it is. If the large bonus amount keeps us reading, we soon find ourselves lost in an off-putting mention of ‘releasing the bonus’, we get distracted by the mention of other bonuses, and there's even a link that takes us away from the Welcome Bonus altogether, before we've even looked at the long text.

Conclusion? The short text isn't all that short, it's a bit complicated and not very focused. But let's say we click thru to the long text...

PokerStars – long text

100% First Depositor Bonuses

Make your first-ever real money deposit using the bonus code '**STARS600**', and PokerStars will give you a **100%** bonus up to **\$600**. You can make up to **three qualifying deposits in 90 days (up to a total of \$600)** - the perfect way to take full advantage of the 100% bonus. Once you've made your deposit(s), you earn the bonus by playing on PokerStars and collecting the number of VPPs equal to 17 times the bonus amount. The bonus is released in \$10 increments, each released into your account as you clear the needed VPPs (170 VPPs for every \$10 increment). You have six months after your first deposit to earn all the VPPs needed to release your bonus.

See the [First Time Deposit](#) information page for full details and examples of how the marketing code works.

Reload Bonuses

From time to time, PokerStars offers reload bonuses to our existing players. These are promoted via emails, on our [website](#), and in the PokerStars game software itself. Make sure you keep a look out for any new announcements.

About Deposit Bonuses

PokerStars offers you some of the most generous poker deposit bonuses online. These are a great way to increase your bankroll, just by depositing and playing at the world's largest poker site. PokerStars is committed to providing you with the best experience anywhere online, and our deposit bonus program is just one of the many ways that we reward our players.

Contact support@pokerstars.com if you have any questions about PokerStars deposit bonuses.

PokerStars long text analysis

- **Tone:** Informative. Not much of an effort has gone into using any tone in particular.
- **Clarity:** Too detailed and complicated. Many of the details could have been put in a separate T&Cs section. There's no explanation of what VPPs are or a link to find out. There's also a bit about reload bonuses that seems to have been thrown in alongside the Welcome Bonus section and the last section, 'About Deposit Bonuses', seems a bit extraneous, probably only there for SEO purposes.
- **Personality:** Brand gives the impression that they will be the poker site that potential new members will check out first. Terms such as 'first-ever real money deposit' (strange hyphen usage!), loads of detail and the fact there's a bonus code all support this impression.
- **Layout:** Chunky and unattractive. The first paragraph is off-putting at 8 lines in length. The bolding does help a little but not much.
- **CTA:** Unclear. We're obviously talking about making a deposit but it doesn't actually say anywhere that the reader should now go and deposit, how to do so or where to go. It's dangerous to assume the reader would automatically go and deposit after reading this, they need to be guided.

PokerStars - Conclusion

- Bit deceptive: not really a \$600 first deposit bonus
- Too long and detailed, not very clear, lacking in focus
- Informative tone
- Interesting brand positioning: ‘we’re who people check out first’
- Unappealing layout
- No clear CTA

Titan Poker – short text



Incredible Signup Bonus

We'll grant you a 50% signup bonus when you make your first deposit at Titan Poker up to a total of \$200. All you have to do is earn Titan Poker Points at our exciting ring games and tournaments. The more you play, the faster you'll receive your Signup Bonus. [Read our Terms and Conditions](#) for information about this fantastic online bonus!

First impressions? Well 50% doesn't sound like a lot so why did they start with that? Then they go into earning points, but don't exactly state why. Then they tell us to read the terms and conditions 'for information about this fantastic online bonus!'. To me there are several things wrong with this last point alone: people know T&Cs are pretty much always negative so why mention this in the short text, normally if you want more info about something you're not gonna go straight to the T&Cs first, plus 'incredible signup bonus' and 'fantastic online bonus' almost sounds like they're taking the mickey out of their own bonus! On the plus side, the sentences are short and punchy. Let's see the long text...

Titan Poker – long text

First Deposit Signup Bonus

1. This offer is only valid to depositing players making their FIRST deposit at Titan Poker.
2. The First Deposit Signup Bonus is released to players as they earn Titan Poker Points at ring games and tournaments. For more information about Titan Poker Points and how to view them as you play and in the My Account section of Titan Poker, [click here](#).
3. At ring games, Points are awarded to players for each hand in which they participate, as long as the hand is raked, no matter whether the player contributed to the pot by placing a blind or a bet, or whether the player folded. Points are also awarded based on the fees paid by the player when buying-in to a tournament.
4. Points are awarded according to the rake taken at ring games as listed in the following table:

Rake Taken Per Hand	Points Awarded
\$0.04 - \$0.09	0.2
\$0.10 - \$0.24	0.5
\$0.25 - \$.50	1
\$0.51 - \$0.75	2
\$0.76 - \$1.00	2.5
\$1.01 - \$1.25	3
\$1.26 - \$1.50	3.5
\$1.51 - \$1.75	4.5
\$1.76 - \$2.00	4.75
\$2.01 - \$2.25	6.5
\$2.26 - \$2.50	7.75
\$2.51 - \$2.75	9
\$2.76 - \$3.00	10
\$3.01 - \$5.00	14

5. Clarification: Rake taken refers to the rake generated at a table in a ring game by all the players during that hand, and not by any individual player.

Titan Poker – long text (cont.)

6. At tournaments, 17 Points are awarded for every \$1 in fees paid by the player:

Tournament fees	No. of Points awarded
\$1	17

7. Clarification: In a tournament listed as \$10+\$1, \$1 is the amount considered as fees.

8. Players cannot earn Points in Play Money games.

9. Bonuses are released to players according to the number of Points a player has earned:

Points	Bonus
600 Points	\$5

Example: For each 600 Points a player earns, a \$5 bonus will be issued. A player who has earned 580 Points will need to earn another 20 Points to receive a bonus payment.

10. Players who deposit in GBP or EUR will receive their bonuses according to the maximum USD amount, converted automatically into their own currencies.

11. Bonus money will be released to a player's account automatically as they earn Points. Players can check the "My Account" page of the Titan Poker Lobby to see their pending Bonus Balance and their Titan Poker Point Balance.

12. Players will continue to accumulate Points as they play, and further releases of bonuses will be made automatically.

13. Players qualifying for this unique offer have three months to accumulate the necessary Points entitling them to their First Deposit Signup Bonus.

14. When preparing to make a first deposit and registering, players with a Titan Poker Bonus Code can list the appropriate titan bonus code.

15. Titan Poker reserves the right to change or end this promotion at any time.

Titan Poker long text analysis

- Tone: Informative, like T&Cs! There's been absolutely no effort made here to make this sound even remotely interesting.
- Clarity: Complicated and too detailed. Yes the sentences are short but it's so boring, who's gonna care?
- Personality: If anything, the brand gives the impression that they know it all and want the reader to know it too, right from the word go! Apart from that, it's pretty plain and lifeless.
- Layout: Far too much like T&Cs, instantly off-putting. That huge rake table in the centre is completely unnecessary and could have been linked to. The simplicity of using a numbered list is completely overshadowed by the fact that it looks like a huge set of T&Cs.
- CTA: Unclear. Again, there's no guidance here as to what the reader should do next or where/how to do it.

Titan Poker - Conclusion

- A bit overemphatic in the short text, yet dull and boring in the long text
- Nice short sentences in the short text but a little unclear
- Long text is far too much like a set of T&Cs, instantly off-putting
- Brand almost seems to be too eager to offer up all these details, maybe trying to position themselves as all-knowing in the industry, but this is the wrong section to be doing this
- CTA is unclear, no real reader guidance from here

Full Tilt Poker – short text

100% Deposit Bonus Get a 100% deposit bonus just for signing up. Up to \$600!

First impressions? For me this is looking good. It's short, sweet and to the point, telling us exactly what we need to know. However, it is slightly contradictory in that it says '100% Deposit Bonus' but then says you get this bonus 'just for signing up', which, as we can probably guess, isn't true. Also, why was the mention of \$600 left to the end of the sentence? It's quite a big amount and should therefore be right at the start to attract attention.

Overall though, this isn't a bad effort. Let's check out the long text...

Full Tilt Poker – long text

100% Deposit Bonus

Double Your Money Just for Signing Up

Full Tilt Poker is endorsed by the biggest pros, so it only makes sense that we would offer the biggest sign-up bonus. That's why we'll match your first deposit up to \$600, just for signing up.

This is the most generous sign-up bonus anywhere online. Simply start playing at any of our real-money games, Sit & Gos, or tournaments, and you'll start earning Full Tilt Points right away. As your points total grows, we'll put cash in your account. It's that simple. Plus, you get to keep the points!

These points can be used to get the same [Full Tilt Gear](#) our pros wear every day. Or, you can use those points to enter valuable Freeroll tournaments.

Play more; earn more - all the way up to \$600.
For [more details about our Sign-up Bonus.](#)

Full Tilt Poker long text analysis

- **Tone:** focused on addressing WIIFM
- **Clarity:** nice and simple, short clear sentences, easy language
- **Personality:** brand gives the impression that because they sponsor the ‘biggest pros’ and you can buy ‘the same Full Tilt Gear...’ (very colloquial, nice) ‘... our pros wear...’, this is the place to play
- **Layout:** lots of white space, easy on the eye, well-placed links, but could have used some bolding in places
- **CTA:** a little unclear. Closest CTA is ‘play more; earn more – all the way up to \$600’ but should be deposit now or something similar

Full Tilt Poker - Conclusion

- Nice clean short text although a little misleading, also continued into the long text with sentences such as 'double your money just for signing up'
- Addresses WIIFM
- Focused and clear, using sponsored pros as a USP
- Nice and fresh language, colloquial
- A little unclear on the CTA

PartyPoker.com – short text



The Welcome Bonus

Get your 100% welcome bonus, worth up to \$/£/€100, when you join PartyPoker.com today.

First impressions? Again this is nice and short and to the point. The wording seems a little odd though... That word 'worth' is a tad confusing: it's either \$/£/€100 or it's not! Using the word 'worth' almost implies it is play money.

Again, we have an element of confusion here with the mention of 'when you join', similar to the last example. It isn't the joining that'll get you the bonus, it's the depositing!

As a side note, that's not the best picture I've ever seen.

On to the long text...

PartyPoker.com – long text

The Welcome Bonus

Get your welcome bonus of up to \$/£/€100 when you open an account today

Experience playing poker for real at PartyPoker.com and we'll match your first deposit, up to a great \$/£/€100.

It's simple

Deposit \$/£/€25	Deposit \$/£/€50	Deposit \$/£/€100
get \$/£/€25	get \$/£/€50	get \$/£/€100

The bonus is broken down and delivered to you in 10 bite-size chunks. Just play at PartyPoker.com and you'll pick up slices of your bonus amount as you go.

You have 60 days to claim your bonus, whatever the currency. However, different currencies have different release restrictions:

- US and Canadian dollars: you must earn six times the bonus amount in PartyPoints
- Euros: you must earn eight times the bonus amount in PartyPoints
- Sterling: you must earn nine times the bonus amount in PartyPoints

[Find out more about earning PartyPoints here.](#)

To get your bonus, follow these simple steps:

1. [Download our software.](#)
2. [Open a real money account.](#)
3. [Make a deposit using one of our quick and secure payment options.](#)

[Find out more about getting started here.](#)

If you have any questions, please contact our 24/7 Customer Care Team.

Grab your bonus today and feel the excitement at PartyPoker.com.

Please read our standard promotional [terms and conditions](#).

PartyPoker.com long text analysis

- **Tone:** bit of a mix here between fun/colloquial and T&C-ish
- **Clarity:** a little insultingly clear in parts! The currency section should probably have been a separate section
- **Personality:** ‘experience playing poker for real’ and ‘feel the excitement’ give the impression that this is where you should play if you want to have fun yet still play serious poker
- **Layout:** big faux-pas here using white text on a dark background! However, the text is split up nicely and bullet points have been used
- **CTA:** Much clearer than previous examples: ‘grab your bonus today and feel the excitement at PartyPoker.com’ Also like the step by step instructions, ‘To get your bonus...’

PartyPoker.com - Conclusion

- Short and to the point, clear for the most part but slightly misleading with ‘when you join’ and confusing with ‘worth’
- Tad insulting in parts
- Nice brand positioning: fun, exciting, the place to play, great experience
- Laid out nicely apart from the white text on a dark background
- Nice clear CTA, good guidance in parts

Everest Poker – short text



The image shows a promotional banner for Everest Poker. At the top, a green bar reads "New Player Promotions". Below this is a photograph of several green and white poker chips stacked on a table. Underneath the image, the text "Welcome Bonus" is displayed in green, underlined font. Below that, in a standard black font, is the text: "Receive a \$200 bonus when you open an Everest Poker account."

First impressions? Very short! But again we see this element of confusion where they mention receiving the bonus when you 'open an... account'. Could this be intentional? Leaving a bit of ambiguity there so members will join just to find out if they really do get a bonus just for opening an account? Then when they realise they have to deposit, maybe they decide to stick around anyway?

Let's look at the long text...

Everest Poker – long text

Welcome Bonus



You can receive a \$200 bonus just for opening an account at Everest Poker!

We are currently offering a \$200 Welcome Bonus to new players when they open an account. To earn your bonus, simply [Download](#) our software, register, and enter the bonus code WELCOME.

Once you make a deposit and begin to play poker for real money, your \$200 bonus is converted to cash incrementally, based on the number of Summit Points you earn by playing real money ring games and tournaments. [Summit Points](#) are part of Everest Poker's reward program. They're easy to accumulate and we'll convert \$0.06 of your Welcome Bonus to real money for each Summit Point you earn.

You'll start to accrue both Summit Points and convert your \$200 Welcome Bonus as soon as you make a deposit and start to play for real money! Players have 30 days to earn the bonus from the day they add the bonus to their account.

As your Welcome Bonus is converted to cash, it is added to your account balance. You can then use it to continue playing in exciting real money poker games.

View [Bonus Terms and Conditions](#).

Everest Poker long text analysis

- **Tone:** confusion, referring the readers as ‘they’ and ‘you’, bit boring and informative
- **Clarity:** language used is a bit weird in places, making it hard to grasp without re-reading
- **Personality:** bit disappointing, brand position is not really clear, apart from vaguely continuing the theme of Everest > mountain > Summit Points
- **Layout:** also disappointing with large paragraphs and some long sentences, no bolding or bullet points
- **CTA:** view the T&Cs, not good, no real guidance to deposit where it should be, ie. towards the end

Everest Poker - Conclusion

- Confusion with 'open an account'
- Language a little unclear in parts
- Tone a little confusing, using second and third person
- Disappointing layout, no real personality
- No clear CTA or guidance

Overall Conclusions

- Most brands seem to be a little deceptive or misleading when talking about how/when members receive the Welcome Bonus
- In general, not much attention has been paid to the layout of the copy or the brand position, which is important at what is probably one of the first sections potential new members will read
- CTAs are generally not present or are unclear
- Very little use of building around a USP, which is proven to be extremely effective
- For the most part, an effort has been made to use colloquial language, connecting with the reader

What can we learn from our competitors?

Keeping copywriting principles in mind, maybe some of these poker giants could improve their acquisition figures by tweaking some of the elements that have been addressed here.

There seems to be a general theme of ambiguity when referring to how and when members receive their bonus, ie. when they join, sign-up, etc. If this is intentional, it may well be working from the point of view that once members have signed up and realised they need to deposit to receive the bonus, by that time they're used to the brand and decide to stay. A possibility. If, however, this is unintentional, these brands could be losing potential members through deception, missing out on building trust at such an early stage.

It's very inviting to read copy from a brand that is obviously confident, with proof of why they are confident. The use of a simple, positive and exciting tone is very effective, as is having a clear brand position, USP and CTA. These elements all leave the reader in no doubt as to who the brand is, what the brand offers, what's in it for them and how they can get it.

Questions?

Thanks ☺