

violate some expectations, and you think about what "the norms" are,

remember whose norms we're talking about.

## HOOK STATEMENT PROMPT: VIOLATING EXPECTATIONS. HARD.

- 1 **Consider the piece you're writing.**  
If you had to create a movie trailer, and the reader were the damsel in distress, with you playing the hero, what would happen?
- 2 **Now make a list.** What are the things in the movie trailer that are all obvious, generic, stereotypical, cliché, expected and incredibly commonplace?
- 3 **Try isolating one of those elements and figure out how you can flip the script.**  
What could you say to violate the reader's expectations of what you're going to say? What can you say to evoke surprise? Create some cognitive dissonance? Suggest there's a better way?

## EXAMPLE

When writing a landing page for an email marketing intelligence agency, the norm for them would have been a movie trailer that went something like,

*"Marketing manager cries at desk because revenue has dropped dramatically and she doesn't know what to do about it. So she takes out an ad in a magazine, costing the company thousands of dollars, and then hurries to send out "that pesky newsletter" that she forgot about 3 weeks in a row now, before rushing off to happy hour to forget about her woes."*

The obvious, expected scene here is the marketing manager just haphazardly sending out a "newsletter" as if it were just an annoying task.

So in coming up with a hook, I wrote this:

*Free-wheeling your email marketing is like attempting to fly an airplane without knowing how—except the pilot isn't the only one in trouble. Your entire company is.*

It makes a clear analogy of something everyone can understand, (how terrible it would be trying to fly a plane by yourself), and also makes it clear that free-wheeling is not a smart idea, and most importantly, I've just flipped the script from everything she's been thinking, giving her a reason to pay attention to me. Maybe the reason her revenue is suffering is because she *is* freewheeling her email marketing. Cue instant attention.

Try this yourself.

Next, we'll tackle step two: You have a central theme, or hook. Now what?

## RECOMMENDED READING

[Emotionomics: Leveraging Emotions for Business Success](#)

[The Psychology Behind Movie Trailers](#)

[Google: The Engagement Project](#)