



Now you can write a genuinely persuasive sales letter

Have a look at that headline above and see if you can pick out the most important word in it. Next to your name, it's the single most important word in the English language. So important is it, in fact, that some direct marketing copywriters have termed it 'the platinum selling word.' And so persuasive is it that sales people all over the universe rank it as one of the greatest 'hidden persuaders' in any form of communications.

It's the word **'you'**. And if you have a quick look at just about any of the greatest direct marketing letters of all times – the classics! – you'll find that the one thing which they all have in common is an exceptionally high usage of the word 'you' in just about every single paragraph of these letters.

Many go one step further and make careful use of the word 'you' in the opening sentence of the letter or even in the first few words of the letter. Here are a few examples for you to look at:

Dear ... If the list upon which I found **your** name is any indication, this is not the first – nor will it be the last time that **you**, etc, etc. *(The opening sentence of the classic letter used by Newsweek for nearly 15 years)*

Dear ... Do **you** close the bathroom door even when **you're** the only one home? *(Psychology Today Magazine)*

Dear ... **Your** faith can move mountains. And the enclosed card is **your** surest way to do it... *(American Bible Society)*

Dear ... It's 2am in the morning and **your** phone is ringing... *(Automobile Association letter)*

In fact, so important is the word 'you' to the success of any sales letter that every time I write a direct mail sales letter I put it through, what I call a **'U-Count'** test before I hand my letter over to a client.

Here's how the U-Count test works: You simply count up the number of times that the word 'you' (including the variations of this word e.g. your ... you're ... yourself) features in your draft sales letter. If you find lots of 'yous' then your 'U-Count' is high. A high U-Count means that you have the makings of a really great sales letter in your hands.

But if your U-Count is zero – not a single 'you' in your entire draft letter - take my advice, tear it up quickly and start again. Because a letter with a zero U-Count is not communicating with anyone – all the copywriter is doing is talking to himself and, the chances are that, no amount of tweaking or editing will ever turn this monologue into a decent sales letter.

Once you have achieved a high U-Count in your draft letter the next thing you must do is keep as many of your sentences as short as possible. You see, short sentences introduce a fast rhythm into your copy. They also keep everything simple. And the faster that people are able

to read your letter, and the clearer and the more simple your sales message is, the more your readers will like you and trust you and... **buy from you.**

And then you must write big! As a rough rule of thumb almost half of the people in Ireland have reading difficulties. So if you send them a letter written in tiny print you're not exactly making it easy for them to enjoy your communications with them. So first, do a 'U-Count.' Next, 'write big.' And now my final piece of advice for you is – wait for it! – you must **SELL!**

This is something which, in the years of plenty, many direct marketing copywriters in Ireland appear to have forgotten how to do. But now that the lean times are back, we must once again remember the old marketing rule that it is benefits' and not 'features' that sell.

To be successful in today's environment your persuasive sales letter must spell out all the benefits of the product or service which you are selling and slowly and carefully answer this all-important question for your reader – **'What's in it for me, if I buy from you?'**

If the answer to this question is absolutely crystal clear in your letter then take a deep bow, because now you have written a super sales letter – and well done **YOU!**

Robert Hayes-McCoy is one of Ireland's leading direct marketing copywriters. His copy and his direct marketing campaigns have won many national and international awards in Ireland, in Europe and in America. You are always welcome to visit his website <http://www.the-real-mccoy.com> and while you are there why not sign up to receive Robert's free online direct marketing newsletter titled: **The Real McCoy**. It's a great read!

