

Title:

Proven Techniques for Writing Persuasive Ads & Letters

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678

Summary:

There may seem to be a thin, if not invisible, line between "features" and "benefits", but understanding the distinction can make all the difference in your marketing success. Another vital tactic involves the creation of a strategic plan. A marketing plan, even an abbreviated one, can be an invaluable starting point in the development of an effective ad, commercial, promotional brochure, or sales letter.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

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Whether you're writing a marketing message to one person or a million, your chances of having an impact on them really takes off when you understand what makes them tick. You're then in a strong position to tailor your message directly to their interests, problems, needs, and aspirations. Easier said than done, but that's where market research, asking clients the right questions, personal observation, and marketing plans fit into the picture.

A marketing plan, even an abbreviated one, can be an invaluable starting point in the development of an effective ad, commercial, promotional brochure, or sales letter. Doing an analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) associated with your business or the services you offer can serve as an excellent launching pad for writing persuasive advertising and sales messages.

Laying the Groundwork

In addition to a dash of writing talent and marketing knowledge, creating effective ads and letters require a clear focus. Knowing exactly what outcome you're aiming for before you begin writing is comparable to mapping out your

travel route before embarking on a cross country drive. For example, if your goal is to generate leads or to qualify prospects, your strategy might be radically different than if you were trying to make immediate sales or simply attract visitors to your web site.

Sell The Sizzle! (not the steak)

The copywriting process tends to flow a lot more smoothly if you have in front of you three lists consisting of benefits, features, and competitive advantages. Organizing them on one page in a column format is the easiest, most efficient way to manage the information. F.Y.I.: There may seem to be a thin, if not invisible, line between "features" and "benefits", but understanding the distinction can make all the difference in your marketing success. Features are important and need to be mentioned, but benefits are the selling points that clients and prospects can relate to and identify with. Basically, benefits are features that have been personalized, elaborated on, and projected into the future. It answers the questions "What's in it for me?"..."Why should I care?"...or "How will my life be enhanced by buying your product or service?"

Crafting the Message

Catching people's attention and arousing interest can sometimes be as simple as incorporating your strongest selling point into the headline or the first sentence of your ad or letter. Several tried-and-proven headline devices for drawing people into your message include asking an intriguing question, making a thought-provoking statement, or beginning the headline with the words "How To". Headlines that convey a sense of urgency, contain a short testimonial of a satisfied client, or have the feel of a news announcement also have been shown to get people to stop and read.

By the way, one of the most powerful and successful advertising headlines of all time, which was also the title of a best-selling book written in 1936, is "How to Win Friends and Influence People", by Dale Carnegie. The title/headline is filled with benefits, it contains the words "How To", and it speaks directly to everyone's strong desire to be well liked, to be in control of their lives, and to feel important. Another popular book Carnegie wrote tapped into that same formula. It's entitled "How to Stop Worrying and Start Living." Apparently, that double-barreled approach was especially effective for him.

Many well-intended ads, brochures, and letters start out with a good head of steam, but peter out as they approach the moment of truth, namely: the call for action! If you don't make it 100% clear exactly what you want the prospect to do after hearing/seeing your message, and if you don't give them a compelling

reason to do so, there's a good chance you'll lose them.

As the acronym AIDA suggests, a response-producing ad or letter must first grab the Attention of the target audience, arouse Interest, trigger Desire, and then prompt Action. Without all four of those "cylinders" firing at the appropriate time, that delicate sequence of events could quickly come to a grinding halt.