

Citibooks' Tips and Ideas on...

Advertising & Promotions

Volume 1

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Nine No-noes of a Direct Mail Letter

Tommy Yan

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It began as another meeting with a potential client. She started writing eight years ago for a company and today holds three administrative positions as well as being the chief copywriter and editor.

I displayed some writing samples and she loved them.

Then I got a chance to look at a direct mail campaign they were sending to their database. It consisted of sample post cards, invitation cards, four-color flyers, door hangers, and a bulletin leaflet all stuffed inside an attractive 9" x 12" graphic-intense envelope. And there was a single page cover letter: which was the weak link.

Why is that? Because it was lacking so many important elements of a killer direct response letter.

Your letter must be the strong link in your direct mail campaign. It has the power to double, triple, or quadruple sales for the same postage. It has the ability to paint compelling pictures and persuade your reader to take action. Nothing else in your campaign can match your letter's power to convert prospects into customers.

Let's make your letters produce more money. Let's take a critical look at that company's cover letter:

1) No headline - just a company logo and a mission statement in reverse text on company letterhead. And nothing else.

You must write a "grab 'em by the throat" headline in all of your marketing campaigns. It's the ad for your letter. It works similar to a first impression. Its job is to compel people to read the next line. It has to scream, "Hey, buddy! This is important. It's for you. Read on."

2) A plural salutation. Never write, "Dear Friends... Dear Partners... or Dear Members." It screams of a mass mailing and not a personal letter. And you know where those type of letters end up?

3) No benefits. The copy was laced with features which spoke about the company and their products. How important they were. But not even a hint about what the prospect was going to get.

4) and 5) No offer or any sense of urgency. The letter stated the products they were selling. Take it or leave it. Not very exciting or does not motivate people to buy.

Even if she had written:

"Sale! Take 15% off your grand total if you order within the next 10 days" ... she would have created an offer with some urgency.

6) No call to action. Most people aren't thinkers. They have a herd mentality. And they need to be led. Really.

If you believe people will automatically call you and give you their credit card number just because they read your letter - you are sadly mistaken. You must lead them by the hand into each step of the ordering process. This erases any doubts of what to do next.

7) No guarantee. This is a major reason many companies are losing sales.

This direct mail company has a 30-day return policy for their standard products, but none for their custom print jobs. (Except in cases of a printing or production error.) Nevertheless, anything that reduces risk should be mentioned anyway to ease prospects' fears and anxieties.

8) No premium. Since a good portion of their database for this campaign is usually strapped for cash—a gift can mean the difference between making a sale or hearing silence.

9) No post script. The P.S. is an excellent place to restate the benefits, tease them with a surprise premium, or paint the picture of deeper benefits not previously mentioned.

In short, it was a boring cover letter lacking any punch. There wasn't anything that would excite a prospect to act. Can you imagine how much money they're losing?

But you don't have to follow their example. You don't have to make the same mistakes. Because you now know some of the killer secrets of a successful

direct mail letter.

Use these tips today to strengthen your letter and watch your response rates soar!

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About the Author :

Tommy Yan helps business owners and entrepreneurs make more money through direct response marketing. He publishes Tommy's Tease weekly e-zine to inspire people to succeed in business and personal growth. Get your free subscription today at www.TommyYan.com.

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Advertising and Fair Housing - Forget About Freedom of Speech

Real Estate Investment Club

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Your occupancy rates are down and you are competing with other apartment communities for residents. You have a novel idea - Hey! Maybe some creative advertising would help! You create a stunning brochure with pictures from your holiday party with everyone having a good time and a guy dressed like the Easter Bunny in the background. You put up some billboards with pictures of your smiling staff members posing around the swimming pool. The next thing you know, you have a complaint filed against you claiming that your advertising violates the Fair Housing Act. The complaint says that 7 out of the 10 people in the pictures on your billboards are Hispanic and that does not reasonably represent the majority and minority groups in your area. The complaint also says that the Easter Bunny in the brochure implies that you are discriminating against non-Christians.

Wait a minute. This is the U.S.A. What about freedom of speech? The First Amendment? You mean I cannot put anything I want to in my advertisements? That's right.

An apartment owner in Virginia was fined a substantial amount of money for using all white models in their brochure because the models were not "clearly definable as reasonably representing the majority and minority groups in the metropolitan area." Your billboard might be a problem because more of the residents in your community are members of racial groups other than what is shown in your billboard picture. However, you may take comfort in knowing that the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) does not consider the use of the Easter Bunny to be discriminatory. So your brochure is probably okay.

The Fair Housing Act says that you may not publish advertisements which "indicate any preference, limitation, or discrimination or the intention to make a preference, limitation, or discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status, or national origin."

Obviously, your ads may not say something blatant such as "no children" or "no Catholics." But what about the more subtle aspects of your ads? The general rule is to describe the property and not the people who live there and the ad will be acceptable. Phrases like "no wheel chairs allowed" or

"independent living" discriminate against people with disabilities. But, it is acceptable to say that your property is "handicapped accessible" or has "wheelchair ramps" because these are descriptions of the facilities.

An ad stating that your property is "great for Jewish families" is unacceptable because it indicates a preference for renting to Jewish families. Describing your property as "near the new Catholic Community Center" may also show a preference for a particular type of resident. However, using terms like "desirable neighborhood" or "great location" is not discriminatory.

Here Are Some Tips to Avoid Problems with Advertising

1. Review your written materials and advertising materials. Get rid of anything that may give rise to a discrimination complaint. Your advertisements and community newsletter should portray a community that is accessible to the protected classes.

2. Add the Fair Housing Logo to all of your advertising materials.

3. If room provides, put a statement in your advertising that contains the following Fair Housing message:

**WE DO BUSINESS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FAIR HOUSING ACT
IT IS ILLEGAL TO DISCRIMINATE AGAINST ANY PERSON BECAUSE
OF RACE, COLOR, RELIGION, SEX, HANDICAP, FAMILIAL STATUS,
OR NATIONAL ORIGIN**

4. Describe the apartment and amenities. Do not describe who you think would be happy renting there.

5. The people in any pictures in your advertising should reflect the majority and minority members of your community. If your staff does not reflect the make-up of the community, do not use a picture of them in your advertisements. Likewise, using a photograph from one of your community events may be a bad idea if it does not represent the majority and minority members of your metropolitan area.

6. If you are not sure whether something in your advertisement is a Fair Housing violation, leave it out.

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5 Reasons Why Blogging is an Effective Marketing Tool

Art Luff

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Blogging is a concept that started in late 90s. It used to be a way to comment an existing webpage, an opportunity for visitors and readers to react or voice out one's opinion on the said page. What started as a single-sentence commentary has evolved into pages of personal take on just about anything and everything under the sun. As it continues to move forward, online advertising has tapped into the blog's potential. Here are 5 reasons why you should use blogging as an Internet marketing tool.

1. Blogging is simple. The simplest way to get your piece on the net is through blogging. No skills are necessary... an average adult can read and type, or at least click a mouse. It's like having a virtual piece of paper and you just write your ideas, experiences, new products, and hope that the truth behind your articles comes out and entice your reader to also try your product. If you have a PC and an Internet connection (who doesn't?) then you can blog and advertise.

2. Blogging is authentic. In this day and age where advertising saturate our lives, we question the credibility of promoters' claims. However, in blogs, real people share their real-life experiences, unscathed by paid advertising. Reading blogs about first-hand product use is like talking to people about their first-hand experience. You definitely want to buy a tried and tested product.

3. Blogging is free. Because blogging is yet to be proven as a mainstream online advertising media, most sites see it as something to augment current marketing tools and thus offer it for free. Any opportunity for free webtime is definitely a bonus especially to businesses that are starting up. Needless to say, paid blog pages can generate more income for your seriously growing business.

4. Blogging builds credibility. As you get more and more into writing your experiences on a particular product or industry, your readers come to realize that they can depend on your posts for their own information needs. As such, you become an expert on it; as a consequence, more readers visit your site and more bloggers link to your blogs. As companies and professional organizations notice the growth of your readership base, they may soon get in touch with you for advertising on your blog page, or make you an affiliate, which pays for every referral generated from your blog site.

5. Blogging builds your market. Unless you are a Hollywood star, chances are, only your Mom reads your posts. Mom has a lot of friends, so she lets her friends know how interesting your blog site is. But you need not depend on Mom to increase your readership base. Look into the following ways to build your market through blogging:

-By using your e-mail. Today, blogging is overcoming the e-mail's popularity in quickly and effectively reaching and expanding a market. In this age of speed and quick access, logging in and downloading e-mail is simply taking longer than clicking into a blog site. Let them explore your site by using a short e-mail message as teaser to your blog site. If your e-mail is on an entirely different subject, use your e-mail signature to give a link to the site.

-By using subscription. An easy way to get your readers e-mail is to give them an opportunity to subscribe to your blogsite. Keep some exclusive information for your subscribers to entice readers to subscribe and give their e-mail address. Just be responsible in using their e-mail address, as the last thing you want is a comment on your blog that you are a spammer.

-By understanding your readers. Conduct a simple survey for your readers to understand their profile and advertising preferences. Ask consumers to give you feedback on a post, an ad link, or a trial that you shared. In this way, it is like interviewing your readers without the commitment and intrusion of a face-to-face interview.

-By joining a blog network -A network of blogs maybe a collection of blog sites that share the same industry, interest, readership base, payment mode, etc. Consumers find credibility and convenience in clicking one link to several real bloggers about a single subject. Clearly, more bloggers are better than one.

-By using RSS. RSS is the fastest growing technology on the Internet today. As such, having RSS feeds to your blog is definitely another means of generating awareness for your readership base. Having a variety of feeds can add interest to your blog site.

Give your business a boost by effectively using blogging as an Internet marketing tool.

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How To Create Set-it-and-Forget-it Websites Using Wordpress. Expert finally reveals the insider secrets to turn a butt-ugly blog into a beautiful niche website, automatically add great content and magically attract thousands of visitors from Search Engines with very little effort. <http://best-resale-deal-ever.com/ewp.html>

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Advertising Works! (Part 01)

Jim Hart

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Are you a business owner representing a product or service? What's your point of differentiation? What separates you from your competitors? Is it quality? Is it the price? Is it the packaging? Is it placement or promotion? The bottom line is are you selling? If not, why not? The answer may lie in advertising.

They say nothing happens unless you advertise. No advertising = no sales. But many business people are leery of paid advertising because it just doesn't seem to return the investment. There are many reasons for this—throwing out spotty advertisements, whether online or offline doesn't work well most often and who can afford to advertise en masse regularly? People are desensitized by hyper advertising on TV, radio, Internet, junk mail, magazines, etc.

People are getting smarter and tuning advertising out—people are getting tired of the Wall Street advertising mentality that has spurred so many books and college courses. As a result, big business advertising focuses on higher and higher volumes of repetitive mass advertising to beat their message into the fewer and fewer minds still receptive to this kind of junk noise. Don't believe me? How do you REALLY feel about advertising you see or hear? Are you sick of it? So are 300 million other people. But what are the alternatives for communicating your offer?

Advertisers are very creative little sneaks who try all kinds of angles to fool you into not realizing you are being advertised at—they cloak advertisements into “infomercials” and now they cloak infomercials into looking like some PBS interview. Buzz words like “info-ads” which are designed to highlight the problems you didn't know you had (like Ezine articles) and set forth easy solutions to complicated problems if you only “buy now”. And you can read article after article, book after book and the bottom line remains the same—the only people making money advertising are the ones selling advertising.

And do you realize the product or service you offer really doesn't matter when you advertise? You can take all products and services in the world and put them into two big piles: The GOOD products and the BAD products. Keep in mind that a good marketing team can sell bad products but a bad marketing team cannot sell good products. And what is the definition of a “bad product” anyway? The definition for a bad product is when people send it back because it sucks and they want their money back. If your product sells and you don't get

a return or a compliant then, for all practical purposes you have a good product. Why isn't it selling then?

People have a tendency to blame the product if the advertising doesn't sell it. But if you have a good product and run an ad and nothing happens how can you blame the product? The product is inert. It's just sitting there waiting to be sold. It's not the product fault. It's the ADS fault. So you can simplify your life by eliminating the “product problem” mentality and wrap your mind around the fact you have an advertising problem instead. Which takes us back to the beginning of this article.

Point of differentiation—what's the point of differentiation of a paper clip? Keep in mind that paperclips are a competitive billion-dollar industry.

Okay, here's the bottom line to this article—if you are not having any luck advertising your product online and can't afford mass advertising then a really SIMPLE solution is to use Off-line classified ads in newspapers. These ads are cheap ranging from \$10.00 to \$50.00 depending on the location of the newspaper and readerships/subscriptions. But there is no better place to spend advertising dollars if you are on a small budget. You are going to make mistakes when you advertise as you hone up your headline and hook to get people to take action and you can do very specific tests in various markets to gauge classified advertising response.

Do you have a website? Take a cue from Travelocity.com, PriceLine.com and other big players on the Internet—they all advertise conventionally—on TV! Why? Internet advertising sucks. We have a business kit called “Advertising Works” which is a very carefully constructed manual on writing effective classified ads to drive people to your website. It shows you how to write ads but more importantly it shows the entire U.S. market and how classifieds can be used to drive the market to your website cheaply by reducing the amount of type in the classified advertisement so they only cost a few dollars. For example a classified ad could read as follows: **ADVERTISING WORKS!** www.smart67.com and that's it! **CHEAP AD!** No phone, no hype, just a headline and a website address. The goal is to test headlines. Test, test, test! Check it out...

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Advertising Works! (Part 02)

Jim Hart

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Are you a business owner? Maybe you are just trying to sell a product or service. Perhaps you are using a website to showcase your product or service. In any case, you are aware that nothing happens without advertising. The question for most people on a small budget (and I mean a REALLY small budget) is what kind of advertising should you do to sell product or drive traffic to your website?

I will assume that most people reading this article have a website and some kind of product they wish to sell. This causes both opportunities and problems. Showcasing your products on a website is a great way to allow people to see your offering via pictures and text descriptions without the cost associated with traditional paper-based literature which, is cost prohibitive for most. That's the good news.

The problem is, of course, getting people to visit your website. And that can be a major problem seeing how there are a billion competitive websites on the Internet wanting yours and everybody else's attention and consumer dollars. That's really tough on small websites who don't have the advertising budget of priceline.com, hotels.com and the other big players (who all advertise on TV as well as print and Internet advertising). And Internet advertising via banner ads, click through advertising like Google ad-sense and other Internet advertising is expensive and, in most cases largely ineffective because people may click to check your site out and window shop, that does not mean they will purchase from you.

Studies show that even well known sites have a dismal click-through to purchase ratio. What this means is people will click an ad, visit a site, window shop, load up a shopping cart all the way to the point they have to haul out a credit card, then they bail...and don't complete the purchase. Who can afford this kind of activity? And it's even worse for new, start-up sites without name recognition.

TV advertising is not an option for most of website entrepreneurs...radio advertising, while more affordable is likewise outside the financial reach of the small website owner. So what do you do?

What's the best way to reach people? The answer may surprise you and it is

classified advertising in (newspapers). Why? For starters you have a qualified audience of people who are reading the classifieds because (they choose to) and not because they are victims of mass advertising. Secondly, classified advertising can be run in very targeted areas starting in your local market area. You will save a TON on ad costs if you simply have a good attention getting headline and a website address. No phone numbers, no blather, just a headline and a website address—these types of ads can be run for about \$10.00 (for a few days) in small local papers and up to about \$50.00 per day in large metropolitan newspapers.

In the scheme of things this is the most affordable way to reach a lot of people in a controlled manner. Thirdly, you can test your ads in small newspapers until you find the “hitter ad” that drives people to your website. It's simple to do: run an ad, check your traffic at the end of the advertising period—how many visitors checked out your site? What pages did they visit? For \$10.00 you can get a LOT of data and insight form your ad dollars. By the way, if your advertising doesn't result in direct sales you should, at least, learn something for the money spent.

Keep in mind that advertising rates are similar throughout the country—meaning that small local newspaper rates are about the same across the U.S. So for about \$50.00 to \$100.00 you could test all four compass points in the U.S. (Run an ad out west, down south, East Coast, and your hometown. Why? Differences in culture. A product may be sell well up north that doesn't sell down south (snow boots for a radical example). The point is, your advertising should be approached as a cost affordable TEST. And you objective is to test, test, test! And if you advertise and don't gain intelligence with it, you are wasting your time and money.

We have a kit called Advertising Works! in the Smart Business Kits section of our website you may want to take a peek at—it is STUFFED with everything you need to know to roll out a successful advertising campaign on a very limited budget. It will show you how to write order-puling advertising and puts the whole U.S. newspaper market at your fingertips. It's hot—check it out!

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Advertising Works! (Part 03)

Jim Hart

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Pursuant to Advertising Works part 1 and 2, I wanted to clarify some issues about web marketing using classified advertising. To recap some major points: All products and services can be grouped into two general categories; good products and bad products. How do you know if you have a bad product? The answer is simple, people will send it back and demand a refund because the product is unsatisfactory. And what identifies a good product? You can be pretty much assured you have a good product if people do not complain or return it to you demanding a refund within 30 days.

So what if you advertise a good product and nobody buys it? Is that the product fault? Or is it the ad fault? Remember that a good product is inert, it just sits there waiting to be sold. I tell people to pretend you have a warehouse full of the (perfect product) and run a test ad to see if you can get people to respond for more “information”. If nobody responds to the ad can you blame it on the imaginary product you don't even have? No, a lack of inquiry would be the ads fault not the product. Keep in mind that a good marketing team can sell bad products but a bad marketing team cannot sell good products.

The product technically means little or nothing when it comes to getting people to respond to your ad. It all lies in the advertising message, the headline, the hook—the winning formula that reels people in—that peeks their interests to hear more about your offer. That's why it is critical to learn how to write order-pulling classified ads, to get people to check out your products or your website.

If you have a website and you have product for sale at that website you have a couple hurdles you need to overcome. First, you have to have an ad that will get people to visit your website and then, you have to have a compelling message to keep them interested in learning more about your offering. Secondly, you have to get them purchase the offering. Keep in mind that your website IS one of your products and your offering is the other. Meaning, if you can't get people to your site, how will they see your offering? It looks like this: The Ad = reader response. (What action do you want people to take?) The action could be many things from visiting a website to calling a toll free phone for more information, etc.

If you run a classified ad in a newspaper you don't want to ask for money up front—but you do want them to take action—let's assume to visit your website. Assuming you write an effective ad and people respond and visit your website to learn more. Once again, you will have to have another headline, a hook and a reason for people to probe deeper into your offering. AD headline = reader response = visit website = another AD headline = reader response = purchase. What you are shooting for is an incremental approach to bringing people into your business in a way that keeps them interested in learning more and hopefully purchasing your good products. Keep in mind that from the first ad to the final sale, it is a step by step approach to advertising, informing, educating, enticing and eventually a person will, at the worst, become familiar with your business and at best will purchase from you. The key is to get people to take action.

Why classified advertising in newspapers? There are a variety of reasons. First, classified ads are cheaper than any other advertising (.). Secondly, they have an audience of people who choose to read the advertising and are not victims of mass advertising. Thirdly, classified ads can be highly targeted towards a particular geographical market or customer type and closely analyzed for responses. You want to test headlines for pulling power. Test, test, test until you find the “hitter ad” that makes people respond en masse. When you find the “hitter ad”, clone it and roll it out! But that won't happen right away—first, find the ad that drives traffic to your site then, develop the step process to making a purchase.

You know your offering can help people right? Then show them how and why they need the offering. Just don't underestimate people—they are smarter than you think and smell a bad deal a mile away. This is especially true at a website where they can just click your site and make it go away. So keep your advertising and all communications honest. This is always a good practice because it keeps you from violating Truth In Advertising Laws and people respect not being lied to with false claims and promises.

Keep in mind there are a TON of unsold “good products” that never get off the ground. Why? The simple answer is either there is not a market for the product or, more probably, the market was never reached—how can people determine if they are interested in your product if they don't even know it exists? This is why it is so important to advertise in some manner and classified advertising is the most cost affordable way to start promoting your website.

If you would like to learn more we have a business kit called Advertising Works! Located in the Smart Business Kits section of our website-- you may want to take a peek at—it is STUFFED with everything you need to know to

roll out a successful advertising campaign on a very limited budget. It will show you how to write order-pulling advertising and puts the whole U.S. newspaper market at your fingertips. It's hot—check it out! Thanks for reading!

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The Secret Power Of Testimonials

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Dear Fellow Investor,

What I would like to address in this article is something that can really make a huge difference in your business. All of us to some extent have used and still use ads, direct mail and flyers as part of our marketing campaign to attract highly qualified motivated sellers.

Here is an exercise:

- Grab the nearest paper and look at the section where your ad and all the other investor ads appear.
- If the ads look similar and states the same thing, then this is going to spell huge opportunity and profits for you.
- If there are no testimonials of happy customers to be seen in these ads then you need to get one in your ad as soon as possible.
- If you can only afford classified ads at this time, then that is OK.
- Maybe you can try to incorporate this strategy in your direct mail and flyer campaigns.

Here is what a good testimonial will say:

"Gerhard and his team helped our family avoid foreclosure and saved our credit allowing us to move on with our lives. Not only did they save us money but he is very professional and caring. I will be telling all my friends and family of his great company."

Let's look at this testimonial closer...

It is crucial that your testimonial will convey genuineness, credibility and results. People do business with people they trust and value. If your testimonial is positioned bearing these three criteria in mind, you will dominate your ad space in the paper.

This same principle can be applied with postcards, letters and flyers. Please use

it and let me know your results. Always emphasize that students use testimonials to overcome objections and establish their credibility.

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How to Write Headlines that Get Read

Michele Pariza Wacek

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Headlines are the most important part of a print ad.

In fact, David Ogilvy, famous ad man and author of Confessions of an Advertising Man, has said that four out of five people only read headlines. Nothing more.

And if people DO choose to read the rest of the ad, they make that decision based on the headline.

That's a big job to put on the shoulders for what amounts to a few words.

But before you start despairing over your headline-writing skills, take heart. There are several "headline types" that have proven to sell products and services over and over again. Below are four of the most powerful and the easiest to implement.

1. How to. Everyone loves a how to headline. How To Quit Smoking in 30 Days Or Your Money Back. How to Write a Novel in 30 Days. How to Lose Weight Fast.

Why do these headlines work so well? Because they promise a solution to your customers' problems. Why else do so many nonfiction books have how to in the title? If the how to is addressing a need, you feel almost compelled to pick the book up and look at it. Or, in the case of marketing materials or articles, this same natural curiosity can entice you to keep reading to discover the answer.

Keep in mind the better the benefit, the more likely you'll catch your customers' attention. (The benefits in the above headlines are quitting smoking, writing a novel in a month and losing weight. All of these can be powerful benefits.)

2. Question. These headlines ask a question (obviously). If you want this headline type to work, it better ask a question that your customers want an answer to. Are you spending too much on your car insurance? Will your marriage fail? Will you know what to do if you're in an accident?

Whatever you do, don't ask a question that only your business cares about. Something like: Do you know what our company has been up to lately? Again, focus on the benefit for the customer.

3. Top ten reasons. Okay, it doesn't have to be ten reasons or even the top reasons. But just as everyone loves how to headlines, they also love top ten reasons.

Four headlines that work. Five ways to fix a broken toilet. Seven warning signs that your house may be making you sick.

Again, the customers see the benefits immediately. Plus, they know exactly what they're getting -- so many reasons for something.

4. Testimonial. This headline uses your customers' words to sell your products or services. This works because people see proof up front that your product or service does what it's supposed to do. If used correctly (meaning people believe it really is a testimonial from a real customer and not something fabricated) then this can be a very effective strategy.

If you choose this headline, put it in quotes so it's obvious it's a testimonial. And use the customers' words as much as you can to make it sound authentic. Whenever possible, get permission from your customer to use his/her name. You may even want to consider adding a photo as well.

(For more headline and copywriting tips, see Robert Bly's book *The Copywriter's Handbook*.)

Creativity Exercises -- Write those headlines

Get a stack of paper, find a couple of pens (I'm partial to gel colored pens) and let's start brainstorming.

Start by making a list of all the benefits of your product, service or business. (Benefits, not features. Benefits are what your customers will get out of your product.)

Put that sheet of paper aside. Now pick a headline type and write it on top of the paper. For instance, Question headlines. Underneath start writing as many different types of question headlines you can think of. They don't have to be pretty, they just have to be a question.

Come up with at least 50 of them. Don't let your brain or pen stop until you do. No matter how painful. If you get stuck, go back and look at your benefits list and pick a different benefit.

I practically guarantee by the time you reach headline number 50, you'll have written at the very least one pretty darn good headline. You might have even uncovered a brilliant one.

Try this same exercise with all the headline types and see what new ad concepts you uncover.

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How to Mail Postcards for 12 Cents Each

Real Estate Investment Club

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You can deliver a mailing piece up to 3.3 ounces for between 11.6 and 12.9 cents each. You probably receive "junk mail" delivered at this rate. I get postcards, self-mailers, brochures, flyers, coupon books and local store catalogs on a regular basis delivered using the US postal service's Enhanced Carrier Route (ECR) rates.

As a real estate investor, you can get more sellers calling you and sell your houses fast using the lowest postage rates available. It works when you want to concentrate a mailing to all homes in a certain neighborhood or area.

We already mailed an oversized postcard to sell 6 of our houses and next week will deliver my famous "advertorial" to homeowners convincing them to call if they want to sell their house quickly and easily.

After showing other investors how to use this low cost, direct mail approach, I have figured out the best way for you to research it and use it yourself. Look in your phonebook under "mailing services." You'll also find print shops and letter shops that can help. Tell them you want to saturate several neighborhoods with a postcard. You want to use their "standard Mail" permit or you can get your own. The cost for your own is \$125 to setup and \$125 a year. But the mailing house may prefer or require you use theirs. That's good.

Tell the vendor you want to mail to all residents. This is also known as a SATURATION mailing. In some areas, instead of an address label, you can have POSTAL CUSTOMER or BOXHOLDER or RESIDENT preprinted on your postcard. In other areas you'll need to buy a RESIDENT LIST which includes all the addresses in a certain zip code or carrier route, but not names. We checked several sources for lists and were quoted 1 cent to 3 cents each. Do pay more than 1 cent each. If you can't get it locally then you can get it from a national company. In fact, it's possible to do the entire job (print, address and mail) with a national company.

If addresses are required, one source you can look into is www.melissadata.com. In fact, if you go to their site, you can get a count of the number of addresses and carrier routes for any zip code you enter. Their cost is about 1 cent each for online download, CD-ROM or labels.

The key postal term to mention is Enhanced Carrier Route Walk Sequence Saturation (ECRWSS). When prepared properly, the mail carrier will deliver one mail piece to each address on the route. That is a minimum requirement, all addresses on a route.

My next mailing will be to an entire zip code has 17 carrier routes, and about 8,000 addresses. If I wanted to I could further target my project to selected carrier routes only.

The cost on my last mailing was 11.6 cent postage each. To get that rate we delivered (to each respective post office) presorted stacks of cards, one for each carrier route with the number of cards needed for each route.

If you do not deliver the cards to each individual post office, then the rate is 12.1 or 12.6 cents. I have found that the easiest way to do it is to let the mailing houses do it all. Tell them what you want and let them figure it out. Get several bids.

I suggest you put your marketing message on a double-sided 4.25" x 8.5" (half sheet) postcard. That way your printing cost will only be 3 or 4 cents each. Use yellow or bright yellow card stock. Your "message" should be filled with reasons why they should respond...what's in it for them.

My first mailing was to a rural area so no labels were required. We just put POSTAL CUSTOMER below the permit imprint. That saved us from buying a list and addressing the cards. Our next mailing to a city area which requires addressing. A mailing to rural routes or postal box holders only should not require labels. Your local mailing house or letter shop should have experience with these types of mailings and can help you plan your campaign and design your postcard (i.e. the position of the permit and address info).

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Richard Roop has been called The Marketing Consultant for Real Estate Entrepreneurs. He is the President of Bottom Line Results, Inc., a real estate acquisition company located in Woodland Park, Colorado since 1996. He is the author of the "How to Sell Your Home in 9 Days" book. Reprinted with permission from www.reiclub.com

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Unlocking the Myth of Hypnotic Communication

Don L. Price

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Unquestionably when the word hypnosis pops-up in a conversation or in the mainstream press, nostrils flair, minds conjure up strong reactions of parlor tricks and pictures of late night scary movies where starry-eyed maidens are seduced to carry out satanic acts.

Here we are, in modern times, where we have set foot on the moon, (oops – better watch my words – there are people who still think the earth is flat) broke the sound barrier, communicate wireless with the most modern technology and still people see hypnosis has a hoax. Even the well educated are not off the hook from such lack of knowledge and ignorant responses.

Altered states and trance experiences have been around long before the word hypnosis. What is unique about hypnotic communications is that it's truly magical and at the same time clearly explainable and understandable.

Regardless, of the mystique surrounding hypnotic communication, there is no hocus-pocus involved, and the only tool you will need is your MIND. Sound too easy?

Follow along and prepare yourself to be amazed - both by the power of your mind to shape who you can become, and by the power you have to guide it.

First, Lets' remove a couple of old misconceptions that you're supposed to talk in a monotone when you do hypnosis and that you are under control of someone's power.

A more accurate way to channel the thought that others can control us would be to restate that hypnosis is powerful communication to influence others as well as the self.

That is clearly evident in advertising communications – persuasive salespeople, politicians, religious leaders, and business leaders just to name a few. The hypnotist may take you into an altered state by using a monotone voice for getting a particular outcome or result. Similarly, a more animated approach, just like a glib politician, can wow you into the same altered state through their mesmerizing performance.

And, as for the self – we are masters at entering altered states many times a day – programming with hypnotic communications for what we can't do rather than what we can do. (Just listen and catch yourself every time you say "I can't", "No", or "That was Stupid")

Parents are excellent at using hypnotic communications for getting an unwanted response from a child – Don't spill your milk! – Turn your back and the next thing you hear is the child's glass of milk falling on the floor.

If I tell you "don't get too excited about my free no obligation gift offer at end of this article -- Or, if I say, "I don't want you to worry about what happens after reading this article". You and the child are stuck with trying to understand what was just said. Unsuspectingly, an unwanted behavior occurs in the child -- spilling the milk -- and you, the reader, somehow wanting to understand what "don't want you to worry" means, will momentarily fall into an altered state conjuring up in your mind all kinds of possibilities.

Hypnotic communications is a very natural process that we all do all the time -- some have just learned to do it more eloquently for positive outcomes and others sabotage themselves. It's a skill that you can develop to be a very powerful communicator for changing yourself and influencing others.

The challenge that people have is they don't recognize, understand or notice the natural flow of hypnotic communication. And, therefore is very transparent and goes undetected by the incomprehensible person.

Here is an everyday example: Put yourself in this scene – you're driving down a freeway or highway and surprisingly you pass an intended off-ramp or street that you were going to exit onto. For a split second you may have been startled upon discovering that you passed the exit and said something like – "dam" or "stupid me" how did I miss that?

Unknowingly you were experiencing hypnotic communications with yourself – an altered state of consciousness - focused in a hyper state of awareness in your subconscious mind on something other than paying attention to your driving – daydreaming as some would describe it.

Watch out for the pink elephant behind you. – Got you! – for a split second did you visualize a pink elephant? Now I can just hear the skeptics saying, this hypnosis stuff doesn't work. Clearly it works! And, it has programmed you into the person you are today.

Habits of behavior are learned through hypnotic communications and work specifically for changing any unwanted behaviors in life. You can learn to eliminate habits of behavior that would enable you to stop smoking, eliminate weight, overcome fears, and to create new habits of behavior for greater success in life.

The mind is much more malleable than we thought and marketers are learning to understand and capitalize on what influences consumers unconscious minds as much as their conscious minds do.

Learning hypnotic communications through self-hypnosis will clearly help guard your mind against self-sabotaging acts and bring strength and awareness of external influence. And, you will experience harmonious balance and control in your life.

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