Confessions of a Website Copywriter

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"47 Closely Guarded Secrets To Creating Turbo Charged Web Page Sales Letters"

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CONTENTS

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my beautiful partner Alea and two wonderful sons Christopher and Ethan… thanks for sharing and supporting me through the hard times guys! I love you!

I'd also like to thank Mal Emery, Chris Bloor, Dan Kennedy, Collin Ameldia, Brian Keith Voyles, Ron Legrand, Corey Rudl, Ken Evoy, Joe Robson, Bob Silber, Terry Dean, Tom Hua, Frank Garon, Christian H. Godefroy, Professor Siegfried Voegele and Alexi Neocleous…. Whether you know it or not, you guys have influenced my thinking and understanding of marketing and helped me take it to a level I never knew existed. Without your help and knowledge, I wouldn't be where I am today. I am indebted to you all.

FREE UNADVERTISED BONUS

Here is a last minute bonus I've thrown in as an extra _thank you_ for investing in this manual. You're going to absolutely love this!
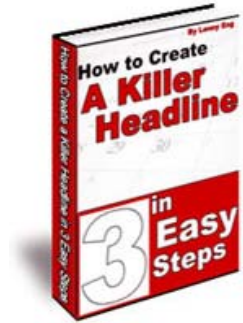
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR – LENNY ENG

T he Author, Lenny Eng, initially got his leg into Marketing as a student at one of Australia's most regarded marketing centers, Edith Cowan University in Perth, Western Australia. Soon after his studies, he started his own marketing business based on all the theory he had learnt.

Confident of success, what followed next shocked Lenny. He quickly discovered that most of the marketing theory he learned at University was only applicable to 'big business'. Consequently, Lenny failed in his maiden business attempt.

Unfazed and now more determined, Lenny started a journey that saw him spend tens of thousands of dollars learning from the best marketing minds in the world including Dan Kennedy, Mal Emery, Chris Bloor, Collin Ameldia, Brian Keith Voyles, Ron Legrand, Corey Rudl, Ken Evoy, Joe Robson, Bob Silber, Terry Dean, Tom Hua, Frank Garon, Christian H. Godefroy, and Alexi Neocleous.

This same journey also saw Lenny uncover some startling pieces of market research from authorities such as Stanford University and Professor Sigfrede Voegele.

Armed with the knowledge of his research, the wisdom of his mentors and his unforgotten marketing theory, Lenny started again and quickly became a highly sought after copywriter and marketing consultant in Australia.

Now, Lenny *'confesses'* about his journey in the hope he will lessen the pain and suffering for others along the same path…

FOREWORD

"I am in the saloon downstairs. I can tell you what advertising is. I know you don't know. It will mean much to me to have you know what it is and it will mean much to you. If you wish to know what advertising is, send the word 'yes' down by the bell boy."
Signed--John E. Kennedy

Many years ago on one May evening, the above note was delivered to A.L. Thomas, the head of the Lord & Thomas advertising agency. The note would have ended up in the trash if Albert Lasker had not been in the office.

Unknown to Kennedy, Lasker had been searching for the answer to that question for 7 years. Lasker was the rising star at Lord & Thomas, the third largest ad agency in the world. It was 1904 when, at the age of 24, he was made a partner and was paid $52,000.

Yet, he did not know, to his satisfaction, what advertising was. Neither could he find anyone else who knew.

Lasker, starving for an answer, was quick to summon Kennedy to his office. In that historic meeting three words were whispered that changed the face of advertising forever.

Those three simple words were…

Salesmanship-In-Print

The concept was so basic and so effective that no one has since been able to improve upon it.

Lasker was so impressed, that he commissioned the brilliant Kennedy to write the set of principles into a series of lessons, which were then used to train Lasker and the Lord & Thomas copywriters.

Unknowingly, Lord Thomas had – thanks to Lasker, Kennedy and the 'Reason Why Advertising Manual' – a training program so powerful that it revolutionized their ordinary writers into super copywriters.

Soon, Lord & Thomas became the training center for the advertising world. Their copywriters were so good that other agencies began luring them away with fantastic salaries. Thus they began spreading the magic of Salesmanship-in-Print to other agencies. Many also left to form their own agencies - John Orr Young, co-founder of Young & Rubicam was one notable example.

"Why 99% Of On-Line Based Businesses Fail – They Don't Create Salesmanship-In-Virtual-Print On Their Website"

"When you master the art-and-science of writing powerful direct-response copy for sales letters, postcards, brochures, catalogs, and ads, you can literally write any size paycheck you wish. Being able to create "salesmanship in print" that works, multiplies you 100, 1,000, 10,000 times over. It is one of the highest-paid activities that I know of."

Dan Kennedy
Master Copywriter and Direct Response Marketer

The Internet allows you to create salesmanship-in-virtual-print and reach thousands of prospects all over the world without ever lifting a finger, or sometimes even processing an order! It gives you an unparalleled amount of leverage to create a virtual empire and a mountain of gold all from the comfort of your own home or office.

There is no doubt about it. The Internet is the biggest opportunity to come around in our lifetimes. Then why do 99% of web based businesses fail? Because most websites fail to create Salesmanship-In-Print on their pages. The fact is that you can have millions of unique visitors at your site each day, but they are worth nothing if they don't do what you intend them to.

"How To Create Salesmanship-In-Virtual-Print Using A Web Page Sales Letter"

"The Internet revolution is sweeping the globe with such swiftness that companies are desperately trying to understand what is occurring, what it all means, where it is going and how to leverage this new opportunity."

Terrence A. Shimp
Advertising Promotion – Supplemental Aspects
Of Integrated Marketing Communications (book)

With all the hoopla about marketing opportunities on the net and the huge rush to take advantage of them, people fall in to the trap of thinking that the Internet is something special and unique. They are under this grave misapprehension that marketing on-line is totally different to marketing off-line.

The truth is that it is and it is not. While some marketing activities are different (e.g. search engines, email and links), the majority are not.

When it comes to your website, the rules that apply off-line still apply on-line to a great extent.

So how do you create salesmanship-in-print on your website? *By using a direct response sales letter on your web page!*

Direct response sales letters work just as well on-line as they do off-line. In fact, I dare say they work better because your readers are qualified buyers, not unqualified suspects.

Consider this fact – the average American household receives 12.5 direct mail pieces each week, a third of which is trashed without being opened. When someone received a sales letter off-line, they have received it because someone sent it to them and not because they are looking for a product.

When someone visits your site to read your sales letter on-line, they have done so on their own accord. They have visited because they are actually looking for a product to buy and not because they have been forced to.

"Is A Web Page Sales Letter Suited To All Products?"

No. Despite what some so called gurus tell you, a direct response sales letter may not be suited to your website at all.

The direct response sales letter is suited to:

• Items that are not purchased everyday; and/or
• Items that consumers spend a moderate amount of time researching and considering before purchase; and/or
• Items that are so hard to get and rare that selling them off-line is not feasible due to the small market size in most geographical areas.

These items might include how-to information products, software, collectibles, weight loss products, medicines and out-of-print books.

Having said that, almost every website in the world can benefit, in part at least, from many of the direct response copywriting techniques discussed in this manual. So if you don't think that web page sales letters are suited to your site, at least consider some of the techniques discussed (e.g. Secondary response devices, bonus overload, design elements and so on).

"What This Manual Is About And How You Can Benefit"

"Direct marketing today is scientific, accountable, versatile, multi-dimensional and growing faster than any other form of advertising"

Lester Wunderman
The Man Who Coined The
Expression "Direct Marketing

The techniques in this manual will help you create web page sales letters that will skyrocket sales through the roof. That much is true.

But you can also use these techniques to:

Produce interesting and intriguing <u>search engine optimized web</u> <u>pages</u> that get read. Create <u>direct response emails</u> that drive floods of traffic to your site. <u>Build</u> a huge <u>email list</u> by converting browsing visitors to qualified leads.

This manual has been created to show ordinary people in 'mom and pop' businesses how to create salesmanship-in-virtual print on their websites.

The strategies discussed in this manual are short, sharp and straight to the point. You won't find any fluff here just to fill the pages and waste your time!

I hope you refer to this manual every time you sit down to create a web page and hope even more that it helps bring you success.

Wishing you the best in success.

Lenny Eng

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SECTION 1 – RESEARCH

Anyone planning to write a letter _MUST_ understand what market research can do for you. Simply put, market research enables you to make informed and effective decisions.

Land planners use market research to better understand the desires of their constituents. Politicians use market research to plan their campaign strategies. Even clergy use market research to determine when to hold a service. So why wouldn't you, the marketer use it to better sell your products?

Advertising only works if you know what I'm going to tell you in this section. Get excited because after you have read and studied this information, you will know more than 98% of businesses about where to start with a successful sales letter.

Confession 1 -- Research The Problems And Frustrations Of Your Prospects

If you think you are in business to sell products, think again. You are in business to solve problems. People don't buy products for any other reason.

As a marketer, you need to find out what your prospect's frustrations and problems are, and then formulate a message that solves them. The more you know about your prospects, the more effective you will be at selling them.

Concentrate on the problems your market <u>wants</u> to solve as opposed to the problems they <u>need</u> to solve. It is human nature for people to buy products they want as opposed to products they need.

Think about it… People need to eat healthy food right? Yet despite their needs, they often buy junk food instead.

In fact, if people bought products based on needs, food conglomerates such as McDonalds, KFC, Burger King, Wendy's Ice Cream, Coca Cola, Cadbury Chocolate and Donut King (just to name a few) would all be out of business.

So would expensive sports cars, brand name clothing, jewelry, Sony Playstations, cigarettes, alcohol, comic books, magazines, movie tickets, kids toys, overseas holidays, Nike Air Jordan's, cell phones and so on.

This should prove to you how important solving wants in your copy are as opposed to solving needs. It should also prove to you that identifying your prospects wants is one of the most important keys to writing successful sales copy.

There are several offline research techniques around for researching your market's wants. But since this manual is about writing sales letters for the Internet, I thought I would focus on the online research techniques as opposed to the offline ones.

These techniques are categorized below into the three phases of market research – exploratory, descriptive and causal.

Exploratory Research

Exploratory research is simply researching your market to get a feel of who they are and what they want. The results won't be enough to find out what you need to know. But it will be enough to form a base from which you can launch your descriptive and causal research.

Here are some different types of exploratory research you can use online.

Government Sources

Government sites publish statistics and studies relating to a number of issues and target markets. They can reveal important demographic information on your target market such as market size, spending patterns, average age, sex, income and other situational factors.

Surf over to these sites and have a look for information relating to your market. There is a high likelihood that you *will* find something relevant, if not for your sales copy, then for your marketing strategy. Here are a few excellent sites which you can visit for research.

- U.S. Department of Commerce - http://home.doc.gov/
- Small Business Administration - http://www.sbaonline.sba.gov/
- STATUSA - http://www.stat-usa.gov/
- Bureau of Economic Analysis - http://www.bea.doc.gov/
- Federal Trade Commission - http://www.ftc.gov/
- U.S. Consumer Gateway - http://www.consumer.gov/
- Environmental Protection Agency - http://www.epa.gov/
- Federal Communications Comm. - http://www.fcc.gov/
- Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation - http://www.fdic.gov/
- Federal Reserve Board - http://www.federalreserve.gov/
- Food and Drug Administration - http://www.fda.gov/
- Securities and Exchange Com. - http://www.sec.gov/
- U.S. Census Bureau - http://www.census.gov/
- U.S. Patent and Trademark Office - http://www.uspto.gov/
- Minority Business Development Agency - http://www.mbda.gov/

- International Trade Administration - http://www.ita.doc.gov/
- Economic Development Administration - http://www.doc.gov/eda
- Standard Industrial Classification - SIC - http://www.osha.gov/oshstats/sicser.html
- CIA World Factbook - http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/nsolo/wfb-all.htm
- Finance Net - http://www.financenet.gov/

Market Research Sites

Market research sites publish studies relating to almost any market imaginable. However, the majority of these sites are pay per content, meaning you will have to pay for any research that they have.

These two sites provide a great deal of free information and are both excellent, particularly when researching your target market's demographics and consumer behavior. See if there is anything there relating to your market.

- Cyber Atlas - http://cyberatlas.internet.com
- NUA - http://www.nua.ie/surveys/

News Sites

News sites sometimes publish articles on trends, case studies and stories relating to your market. This is another great source which you can refer to. Have a search for articles relating to your market at these great sites.

- Find Articles - http://www.findarticles.com
- Yahoo - http://www.yahoo.com (when you type in your search terms, select search news stories)
- Bpubs - http://www.bpubs.com
- Or enter "Your Topic + News" into a search engine.
- Or visit your local library… they have got tons of great stuff.

Discussion Forums and Newsgroups

In my opinion (and in the opinion of many others) discussion forums and newsgroups take the cake when it comes to exploratory research. They are the online equivalent of a focus group and do not cost anything but your time.

Go to the forums and groups that your prospects frequent, and observe what they are discussing. Ask questions relating to the problems and frustrations that they suffer. Ask them to recommend a product that solves a problem similar to your product, and then ask them why they recommended that product.

Do not come across as a marketer. Come across as another friendly participant, interested in what others have to say.

Then, after they reply, make as many notes as possible. Do not post to just one forum either. Post to a large number of them so you get more coverage and more responses.

Here are some really handy resources you can use to find a discussion forum/newsgroup relating to your topic.

- Google Groups - http://groups.google.com
- Yahoo Groups - http://groups.yahoo.com
- Discussion Lists - http://www.discussionlists.com
- Forum Find - http://www.forumfind.com
- Board Reader - http://www.boardreader.com (Search engine that finds postings on discussion boards)
- Or enter "Your Topic + Forum", or "Your Topic + Group", or "Your Topic + Discussion" into a search engine.

Search Engine Queries

When people use a search engine, they are obviously interested in the search terms they use. This is an excellent way to find out how much interest a particular subject is getting, (although it may be hard to determine whether the people searching on these terms are actually part of your target market or not).

There are several tools on the Internet that can tell you how many times a particular word or term has been searched on a search engine. Check them out to see how popular terms relating to your product benefits are.

- Here are some excellent search query resources which you can use.
- Good Keywords - http://www.goodkeywords.com
- Overture - http://www.overture.com (Use their excellent Term Suggestion Tool)
- Wordtracker - http://www.wordtracker.com
- Google AdWords Keyword Suggestion Tool - https://adwords.google.com/select/main?cmd=Doc&page=faq.html
- Espotting Keyword Generator - http://www.espotting.com/advertisers/register01.asp

Descriptive Research

You have used the above exploratory research techniques to get a good feeling for who your target market is and what they want.

The next step is to conduct a survey using the information collected in the exploratory research as a guide to design the questions. Your survey will pinpoint exactly what your target market wants and who they are.

Here are some tips to getting your survey off the ground.

Survey Objectives

The first step is to define exactly what you want your survey to find out. Since you are chasing information relating to your sales copy, your objectives in this case would be to:

1. Determine the problems that your target market wants to solve
2. Determine what they think of your product benefits, and
3. Obtain a demographic profile of the respondents who represent your market (e.g. Age, sex, financial status etc).

Do not make the mistake of asking questions that don't relate to these three objectives.

Designing Your Questions

The second step to getting your survey off the ground is designing the survey itself. A good survey will follow these basic guidelines:

- Include some easy <u>warm up questions</u> at the beginning. This makes the survey appear to be easy and your respondents will be more likely to start it. Once they have committed themselves, they almost always finish (as long as the survey isn't too long).

- Leave any <u>difficult or embarrassing questions</u> to the <u>end</u> of the survey. Your respondent will be committed to finishing it at this stage and will show less resistance to them. This will generally be your demographic questions.

- Keep your questions <u>short and to the point</u>. By using simple language and avoiding jargon and acronyms, you make your questions easy to read and increase the probability that your respondents will complete your survey.

- <u>Avoid</u> writing questions that make <u>assumptions</u>. For example, you shouldn't ask "Is your dog male or female?" without leaving room for the possibility that your respondents may not even own a dog.

- <u>Avoid</u> asking <u>leading questions</u> such as: "Through phone conversations with my customers, I have learned that most people prefer to receive their newsletter in text format as opposed to HTML. How do you prefer to receive your newsletter?" The stated preference will bias the results.

- <u>Limit</u> the number of <u>open-ended questions</u> you ask (i.e. questions that require a written response) as these are less likely to be answered. Well-written multiple choice and scaled questions (i.e. questions that ask the respondent to rate something) are generally preferred because they are faster to answer.

Also, here are the types of questions you can use:

- Multiple choice questions

- Open-ended questions (e.g. "What do you think about...?
  Answer:_____")
- Rating scales (e.g. "On a scale of 1 to 10 -- 1 being Strongly Agree and 10 being Strongly Disagree -- do you think...")
- Agreement scales (e.g. "The sky is blue." Do you: Strongly Agree / Agree / Not Sure / Disagree / Strongly Disagree)
- Check boxes (e.g. "Check the statement that most closely describes how...")

I could honestly write a book on how to write an effective questionnaire, but I don't have room for it here. Just use common sense and don't go overboard in the number of questions you ask. You should be able to extract whatever you want to find out with some degree of accuracy.

Finding Your Sample

You obviously want the people you recruit for your survey to be a true representative of your market. There would be too much error otherwise. Here are 3 really easy methods for recruiting your respondents.

1. Your Customer Base – If you already have a list of customers, send them your survey.

2. An Email List – Find an email list relating specifically to your target market and email your survey. You could run a small classified ad in an ezine or a solo ad through the list. It all depends on your market and the lists available.

3. A Pop Up On Your Site – Use a pop up on your site to display your survey to your visitors. Assuming you're getting enough qualified visitors, this should work wonders, (although I prefer to get their email details for my ezine first before I email them a link to my survey page).

Now here is a tricky question. How many people should you survey? Well the more respondents you survey, the more accurate the results. There is a complicated logarithm market researchers use to determine how big their sample must be to achieve a certain level of accuracy, but it can get messy.

For the purposes of keeping this simple, I recommend getting at least a hundred or so replies. If you can afford to get more, then get more.

Conducting The Survey

You have determined your survey objectives, designed your survey and selected your sample. Now it's time to conduct your survey using on one of the following 3 options.

1. <u>Do It Yourself</u> - This method involves sending an email containing survey questions to your sample, and then manually compiling the results in a spreadsheet. This may be applicable to surveys sent to a small sample, however due to time constraints it would not be feasible utilizing this option with a big one.

2. <u>Client Side Software</u> – This involves installing survey software on your site. There are some great software programs out there that will allow you to design some great survey forms and provide detailed analysis of the results at the click of a button.

   However this is another option I wouldn't recommend unless you are big business who conducts surveys regularly and has a lot of money to spend. Survey software can be extremely expensive to purchase and install, not too mention the ongoing maintenance required on your site.

   If you are interested in using client side software, here is a page that contains reviews of all the popular software programs available - http://www.sims.berkeley.edu/~sinha/teaching/Infosys271_2000/surveyproject/surveysoftwarereview.html

3. <u>Third Party Provider</u> – This basically involves paying a third party provider to host the survey on their site and process the results for you. This is the option I recommend, especially if you don't use surveys often and/or don't have a huge budget.

   You'll get the benefits of a fully-customized, dynamic survey with real-time tracking and analysis of your results without the programming headaches and expense.

I personally use the 'The Ultimate Marketers Resource' (http://www.goldbar.net) ($19.95 per month for unlimited surveys, autoresponders, forms, list servers etc) and manage to get by easily enough (although there are some small limitations).

Another option is 'Survey Monkey' (http://www.surveymonkey.com/Pricing.asp) which is a paid service (monthly fee of $19.95 for 1,000 respondents) that also provides a free option (10 questions per survey to 100 respondents). 'Zoomerang' (http://zoomerang.com/join/member-subscriber.zgi) is another similar option ($599 per year) that also has a free option (20 questions per survey to 50 respondents).

Analyzing The Results

After your respondents have completed your survey, analyze the data. You should really have an excellent feel for who your target market is and what they want at this stage.

Causal Research

After you have completed your survey, and collected the information discussed in the next few chapters, you should have enough 'ammo' to write your sales letter.

The causal research comes in *after* you've written your sales letter. Causal research simply involves split testing the various elements in your sales letter to see which 'pulls' the best response. We discuss testing in section 5, so we won't go into it here.

Knowing who your market is and what they want is one of the big keys to success in your sales letter... so do not cheat when you do your research because it will come back to haunt you in the end.

Confession 2 -- Make A List Of Features And Benefits

As stated previously, you are in business to solve problems not sell products. Solving problems is the only reason people buy. If you have done your market research, you should have identified the problems and frustrations your prospects _want_ to solve. Now here's the second part… working out exactly how your product _solves_ them.

Successful salesmen acquaint themselves with every feature and benefit their products have to offer, just so they know exactly how to solve their prospects' problems. They can match their product's benefits to their prospects' problems only because they have an intricate knowledge of both. You should do the same.

Start by examining your product in depth. Make a list of every feature your product has. Now go through each feature and turn them into benefits. Here is an example of a feature, along with the benefit that the feature gives.

Feature: This car gets 60 miles to the gallon.
Benefit: You'll save money on gas. You won't need to stop to get gas as often.

Feature: Rust proof wheels.
Benefit: You'll never have to spend any money to buy new wheels again because these will last forever.

The 'So What' Technique

The 'So What' technique is extremely powerful. It allows you to quickly and easily generate a huge amount of benefits from each feature.

It works like this. Start by writing your product feature on a piece of paper. Put yourself in your customer's mind set, and then ask yourself 'So What?' Keep answering this question until it's impossible to ask it anymore.

Here is an example of this technique from Ken Evoy's 'Make Your Words Sell' ebook:

Feature: Software that's easy to install and extremely easy to learn.

So what?   You need no knowledge of computers. Just point and click.
So what?   You don't have to learn a new skill.
So what?   You'll save days, even weeks of hard work just to get started.
So what?   You won't be distracted from your family life.
So what?   You can start your own business immediately.
So what?   Your family will begin to enjoy those extras within days.
So what?   You will have achieved exactly what you want…
So what…   er…

But don't just stop at your product's features and benefits. Do the same with <u>all</u> other elements of your offer such as your bonuses, guarantee, and payment proposition. The offer as a whole is more beneficial and persuasive to your prospect than just your product.

Feature: 12 month money back guarantee
So what?   You can use it for a whole year and if you find it's not for you, then you get your money back.
So what?   We must be confident that you will be satisfied.
So what?   Only a really honest and established company would give a guarantee that long. Most only give 30 days.
So what?   It must be everything we say it is.
So what?   If it wasn't we would be foolish to offer such a long guarantee.
So what?   Your decision to buy from us is totally risk free.
So what?   You won't be any worse off if you tried then asked for a refund.
So what?   Your family, and your confidence, won't suffer…
So what?...   er…

Use Specific Benefits, Not General Ones

If you want to really make your benefits pack a wallop, make them specific rather than general. Specific benefits communicate a more quantifiable reason to buy, and are consequently many times more persuasive then general ones.

Consider this example. When Jimmy Brown of ProfitVault.com fame wrote an ebook about joint venture marketing, he tested two titles:

"How to Launch A Joint Venture With E-zine Publishers"

and

"How to Sell 300% More Of Your Product Within 72 Hours Than You Did All Month"

The first title has no benefit at all. The second title offers a specific benefit (Sell 300% more of what you sold last month in 72 hours) and was downloaded *300 times more* than the first title.

Confession 3 -- Research Your Competition

You know what your market wants and exactly how your product can satisfy them. There is just one barrier left... your <u>competition</u>. There is a planet full of on-line competitors out there, all selling to the same prospects. So why should people do business with you rather than your competitors?

If you want to be successful, you need to research your competition to see how they are competing against you and how they affect your business. This will then allow you to create a unique selling proposition and marketing mix (product, price, promotions and distribution) to compete with them.

Here is a short 'how to' list for getting to know your competition better:

Finding Your Competitors

Finding your competitors is relatively easy. You simply start by searching your favorite search engine using relevant keywords, then investigating the search page results.

Determining Which Competitors To Worry About

There could be hundreds (maybe even thousands) of competitors on-line (depending on your market), so you need to work out who to worry about and who not to. You can do this by referring to the site information provided on the Alexa toolbar.

The Alexa toolbar is a free program that attaches itself to your browser. Once installed, it provides information to <u>www.alexa.com</u> on all the sites you visit and gives you the opportunity to write reviews. This allows Alexa to provide exclusive site information on how much traffic a site's getting, contact information, site reviews and links to similar sites. This information is free to all Alexa toolbar users and it's the ultimate tool for determining which competitors to worry about and which ones not too. You can download the toolbar at <u>http://www.alexa.com</u>.

You should also go to relevant discussion forums and newsgroups and ask the communities there about what they think of your competitor's products. If you get no responses, then it's probably because no-one has bought from them (good for you). If you do get responses, then you'll have access to any criticisms they may have, giving you an opportunity to build a valuable unique selling proposition.

Making Notes

Once you find your competitors, you should make the following notes:

- The product(s) they are selling
- The problems their product solves
- The features and benefits their products have
- The bonuses they are offering
- The unique selling proposition they are using; and
- The price that they are selling for.

Monitoring Competitors

Analyzing your competition only once is obviously dangerous. The market changes all the time, so you need to continually monitor your competition to stay abreast of them.

And the method which you use to monitor your competition depends entirely on your promotional strategy. If you are generating prospects through search engine optimization, then regularly monitoring the search engine listings will obviously be more important to you than if you were only selling through ezine advertisements.

Regardless of your situation, here are some techniques for keeping an eye on your competition. You'll have to use common sense on how you use each one depending on your marketing strategy.

Monitor the search engines. This will keep you up to date with the new kids on the block.

Subscribe to your competitors ezines and/or email lists. This will keep you informed every time your competitors run a special offer or launch a new product. Join their affiliate programs. If they run an affiliate program that is half decent, they will regularly email you about new marketing developments and special offers.

Determining Who's Linking To Your Competitors

Sites that link to your competitors may also be sites that you can approach to link to you or do joint ventures with. You can find out who is linking to your competitors by going to Google (http://www.google.com) and using the search term link:http//www.competitor.com with competitor.com being the URL of your competitor.

The search page should now list every page of your competitor's web site along with who is linking to them. You can use the same technique at AltaVista (http://www.altavista.com).

You could also use the Good Keywords tool at http://www.goodkeywords.com. This tool is free and can be used to determine any site's link popularity at Google, AltaVista, MSN and Lycos.

Contact Information

You can probably find the information you are looking for by going to the site's 'Contact Us' or 'About Us' page. Alternatively, you could use the Alexa toolbar which provides contact details of the sites you visit.

If all else fails, go to www.betterwhois.com and enter the URL in the 'who is' query form. This should provide contact information for the person/entity who registered the domain name you searched on.

Confession 4 -- Create Your Own Unique Selling Proposition

You know what your market wants, how you can satisfy their wants with your product and how your competition can spoil your plans. The next step is to develop a reason why your market should do business with you rather than with your competitors.

Your 'unique selling proposition' is one of the most important elements in your message. Here is the two part question:

"Why should I do business with _you_ versus any other option available to me in your category?"

When you have a great answer to that question, you can really push sales through the roof.

To demonstrate how powerful and important a USP can be, here is a story that Dan Kennedy often tells at his seminars:

> *Two kids are determined to go to college. They're both orphans, have no family, no resources, no athletic ability, no scholarships.*
>
> *Here's the plan they hatch. The plan is to find a crummy, miserable, stinky little retail business that's on the edge of campus and on the brink of failure. They hope to find an owner who is only too happy to lease it to them with no money down, just to get out from under the ongoing bills.*
>
> *The plan is the two kids are going to run the business together. One of them is going to go to school during the day while the other one works the business. Then they're going to flip flop at night. They're going to do everything in the business. They're even going to sleep in cots in the back room, keep the money and this is how they'll get through school.*

Shortly into this plan, the business is continuing to hemorrhage money. One partner bails out on the other. The one who stayed behind dropped out of school, determined to honor his commitments and make it work.

Shortly thereafter he invented a unique selling proposition. It's just ten words long. And on the strength of his unique selling proposition, he not only almost immediately turned a failing business into a successful business, but he multiplied it.

Pretty soon he had multiple outlets. He dominated his city, his state and ultimately all of North America. In under five years, according to Fortune 500 Magazine, he became one of the 1000 wealthiest citizens on the planet, all thanks to his ten word unique selling proposition.

His unique selling proposition was so powerful – think about this – that for a decade we could go out anywhere in North America, stop a hundred people at random on the street and play word association with them:

What's the first thing that comes into your mind when we say ____?

We could give these people on the street the generic equivalent of his business and for 80 or more of the 100, the first thing on the tip of their tongue was the proprietary brand name of his business and what a good job he did.

That's called market place dominance! That's what this kid got. He turned his entire industry upside down, and had everybody chasing him for ten years trying to catch up.

The magical USP was this:

> ***"Fresh Hot Pizza Delivered In 30 Minutes Or Less Guaranteed!"***

*On the strength of that unique selling proposition, Tom
Monaghan took a crummy little quarter pizza joint and built the
'Dominos Pizza' empire.*

Creating Your USP

Start off by getting a piece of paper and writing –

"You know how most _____ businesses…"

Now write all the bad things the competitors in your marketplace do. These are things you can eliminate or capitalize on to develop powerful buying reasons for your own product.

Follow this up by starting another section on your piece of paper and write –

"Well, what we do is…".

Now write what makes your web site and business different from your competitors and why your market should buy from you instead of them. Drill this down to a simple phrase that your prospect can remember. Make this your unique selling proposition.

If you don't have a USP, then create one!

If you are stuck for ideas, here is a list of 28 different types of USP's you can create for your product.

4. **Customer Service** – Do you provide a high level of customer service?
5. **Quality** – Is your product of higher quality than your competitors?
6. **Technology** – Do you use the latest technology to make your product or deliver your service? If so, does this make you special in your industry?
7. **Specificity** – 798 special herbs and spices is an example of this.
8. **Product** – Is it unique in itself?
9. **Convenience** – Is there something convenient about your product that makes it unique? e.g. A drive through service.

10. **Quick Response** – Always delight your customers with the speed of your response. Maybe use this if it makes you unique in your industry.
11. **Esthetics** – Is your product esthetically pleasing?
12. **Personal Involvement** – Being a small company allows you to provide a more personalized service for your customers.
13. **Precision** – e.g. We painstakingly produce product X using only the finest ingredients.
14. **Design** – Is your product designed differently? e.g. Deeper pan pizzas
15. **Distribution** – Do you distribute your product more readily? e.g. Available in every suburb.
16. **Trust** – e.g. In business for 27 years
17. **Qualification** – Are your staff members more qualified than others in your industry?
18. **Price** – Are your prices lower than others in your industry (careful with this one).
19. **Added value** – e.g. Free movie tickets with your meal.
20. **Risk Reversal** – Can you offer a 100% money back guarantee? Does this make you unique?
21. **People** – Are your staff better trained, better qualified, fresher, younger or something unique and valuable to your customers?
22. **Systems** – e.g. Service delivered on time and on budget.
23. **Range** – Do you have the biggest range of products?
24. **Exclusivity** – Is your class of product only available from you?
25. **Scarcity** – Is your product only available to certain qualified clients?
26. **Simplicity** – Is your product easier for your customer? e.g. Easier to assemble.
27. **Flexibility** – Can you offer flexibility in your product? e.g. Different color, different size, different shape.
28. **Size** – Are you the biggest distributor of your products in your industry?
29. **Remove The Frustrations** – e.g. Quick and easy.
30. **Remove Embarrassment For Your Customer** – e.g. Package pornographic material discretely so others won't be aware of what is in the package.
31. **Safety** – Are your products the safest? e.g. Volvos

Where To Use The USP In Your Sales Letters

You can use your USP in the following areas on your sales letter:

1. When you introduce your product
2. When you introduce your benefits
3. When you build your credibility
4. When you close the sale

Introducing your Product

When you introduce your product or service, you'll want to have one statement of your USP weaved into the copy. You could use something like:

> *"Introducing the Only Rainbow Widget with 24 hour technical support, 365¼ days a year"*

Introducing Benefits

Use your USP when you introduce your benefits as well. Slip it in inadvertently. Here is an example:

> *"And above all that, you can use your rainbow widget anytime and no matter what happens, you can always call our toll-free technical support. (Though the Acme Rainbow Widget is very simple to use, almost never breaks down, and you likely will never need any support, it's nice to know that you always have help any time you want. You've got to see these rainbow widgets in action! Whew, you'll...)"*

Building Credibility

You should use credibility boosters to prove that your USP is real and that it works. [Section 4 – Message Credibility](#) of this manual discusses credibility in more detail.

When Closing the Sale

When you are closing the sale, go over a few key benefits again and put your USP in there. It helps with the logical part, when the reader is justifying the sale,

and helps builds that last little bit of believability you might need to close the sale.

Confession 5 -- Search For Your Prospect's Objections

After completing the previous 4 tips, you should have an idea of how you are going to sell you product in your letter. Unfortunately, there may still be reasons why your prospects won't buy from you. These reasons are known as objections.

You should always make a list of your prospects objections, then formulate a strategy to address them. This is known as 'strategic writing'.

Bob Stone, author of "Successful Direct Marketing Methods", gives this example of strategic writing in his book. Bob was tasked to write a sales letter for the University of Missouri-Kansas City to other direct marketers encouraging them to enroll. Before he started writing, he identified the potential problems he faced. He then wrote down strategies in which he could address these problems. Here are some of the problem/strategic solutions he wrote:

Problem 1:   Will a professional direct marketer accept the word of a college administrator over a professional colleague?

Strategic Solution: Write the letter printed on my personal letterhead and use the salutation "Dear Colleague".

Problem 2:   Is it better to bury the stiff requirements in the body of the letter or to get the major negatives out of the way in the first paragraph?

Strategic Solution: Get the negatives out of the way immediately.

Problem 3: Because most of the prospects probably had attended only one-or-two day seminars, might they construe these to be adequate.

Strategic Solution: Promote the advantages of the longer learning time at the university.

How To Discover Objections With Your Secondary Response Devices

We touch on secondary response devices later in this manual, but they deserve a mention here.

Secondary response mechanisms are basically online lead generation tools. They are those little ezine subscription boxes you see on a webpage or a pop up box when you arrive at a site.

They are used to send follow up information to those who enter their email addresses into them (leads).

But they are also a great way to gain insights into your prospect's objections. My friend Dan Thies at www.seoresearchlabs.com explained this all quite eloquently when I asked him for feedback on this manual. This is what he said.

> "One comment I would offer, and this is not a criticism of your book so much as a criticism of the "100% automation" approach, is that I've had much better results by eliminating the "autoresponder series" from my marketing, at least during the initial stages.
>
> I like to use the backup response mechanism to get some qualifying information, use an autoresponder to send the "bonus" out, and have the next contact come from a live person.
>
> The obvious disadvantage is that you must staff accordingly, and some basic questioning and selling skill is required, but the conversion rate goes through the roof.

For someone who is launching a new business, or even a new offer, the feedback gained from this process is invaluable in uncovering objections and unanswered questions, which can be incorporated into a more compelling "second generation" sales letter, FAQs, etc. You can always automate the follow-up once you have a satisfactory conversion rate established."

Need I say more?

Confession 6 -- Include An Evaluation Form With Your Product When You Ship It

Evaluation forms are very powerful marketing tools and are incredibly simple to utilize. They give you an <u>opportunity</u> to determine exactly why your customer purchased your product in the first place. This is invaluable information which you can use to greatly improve your copy.

They also allow you to show your customer <u>you care</u>, which goes along way to encouraging repeat business in the future. This is the whole key to direct response marketing – making purchasers happy with their purchase so they are more likely to purchase from you again.

Evaluation forms are also a well kept secret to obtaining an unlimited number of <u>testimonials</u>. Testimonials are one of the most persuasive elements you can add to your sales copy. Unfortunately many businesses struggle to get them. However, when you use evaluation forms, you have a clever little device that pulls a steady supply in. You just have to word the form correctly.

You should include an evaluation form and postage paid envelope with your product when you ship it to your customer. If you sell an electronically downloaded product, then include a web page evaluation form with the download package.

It's that easy. You could also offer a bonus for completing the form to boost the response rate.

Here is an example of an evaluation form.

CUSTOMER EVALUATION FORM

For us, the most gratifying aspect of doing business is seeing how much we help our customers. Please complete this form and send it back to us in the envelope attached to address any problems you might be currently having as well as help make our product

---

Basic contact information so you can get back to your customer if so required.

Tells you why your customer bought, which can help improve your copy in the future.

Q6 & 7 are two magic questions which can bring in some powerful testimonials.

better.

Q1. Full Name:

Q2. Address:

Q3. Phone Number:

Q4. Email Address:

Q5. Using a scale of 1 to 4, please rank in order of importance <u>WHY</u> you purchased my copywriting services, with 1 being the most important reason and 4 being the least important reason:
_____ I don't have time to write advertising,
_____ It's more convenient for me if you write it,
_____ I didn't think I could write copy as good as you,
_____ Other, please specify:

_____

Q6. In question 5, you ranked the main reasons why you took advantage of my services. Please explain how I 'delivered' on these benefits. Please include any praise or suggestions.

Q7. Please summarize your feelings about the service you received and give any additional comments, suggestions or praise:

This is where you find out who your customers are.	These questions are optional: Q8. What sex are you? Q9. How old are you?
This is where you get the person's permission to be used in a testimonial.	Q10. May we quote you in a testimonial? Yes / No Signed: _____ Thank you for your feedback.

SECTION 2 – COPYWRITING

After doing your research, you should be armed with enough ammunition to fire off a sales pitch to your prospects. You should:

- Know what problems your prospects <u>want</u> to solve,
- Have a list of <u>features</u> and <u>benefits</u> which can solve these problems,
- Have a <u>unique selling proposition</u> which differentiates your products from your <u>competition</u>, and
- Have a strategy to combat your prospect's <u>objections</u>.

Now it is time to write your copy in a sales letter format. Why? Because a sales letter format has proven to be the one that achieves the highest response.

This section will discuss how to write a profitable web page sales letter. If you are unfamiliar with what a sales letter is, I have reprinted an article on the following page by copywriter Sam Robbins to explain it. The only addition I can make to Sam's article is that your direct response site should at least contain the following pages.

1. <u>Sales Page:</u> This is the main page that contains your sales letter. It also links to other related pages on your site.

2. <u>About Us / Contact Us:</u> This explains who you are, how that relates to your product and how to contact you. This can greatly increase your credibility and believability if used correctly.

3. <u>FAQ Page:</u> A frequently asked questions (FAQ) page allows you to address any objections or hesitations your prospect may have when considering a purchase. They are a fantastic way of reducing your prospect's 'purchasing risk' and are a must have as part of your sales letter site.

4. <u>Testimonial Page:</u> If you have a ton of testimonials, but not enough room to use them on your main sales page, don't let them go to waste. Testimonials are one of the most powerful persuaders out there so put any

spare testimonials you have onto a separate page and provide a link to it. The more testimonials the better.

5. <u>Affiliate Page:</u> This details how people can join your affiliate program.

6. <u>Supporting Pages:</u> These pages contain proof of your claims to boost your credibility and believability. Examples of these pages might be a scanned picture of a check to prove how much money you can make, testimonials of satisfied customers, news articles promoting your product etc. (see the rest of this manual for more information).

7. <u>Pop Up Page:</u> This provides a secondary response mechanism and allows you to follow up with your prospects (See Confession # 25 for more information).

8. <u>Online Order Page:</u> This is where your customers can order online using their credit card.

9. <u>Fax Order Page:</u> This is simply a fax order form your prospects can download to fax their order (if you accept fax orders).

Now for Sam's article…

"Anatomy of a Direct Response Letter"

by Sam Robbins

Direct response letters have been around for a very long time. The main reason for this is because they work! In fact, any sales letter not written in a direct response "format" is almost doomed from the beginning to fail.

Many people on the Internet have turned away from using direct response letters thinking that it won't work. They think that people on the Net are some how "different" than the regular John Doe that receives his "snail mail" everyday.

Nothing could be further from the truth! The main reason direct response letters work so well is because they "attack" the emotional side of the buyer. And you must never forget this:

People buy with emotions, NOT logic!

Regardless of whether you're on the Internet and you have your own web site, or you send out emails or regular mail as part of your promotional campaign - you MUST always attempt to write your sales material in a direct response fashion.

The following is a step-by-step breakdown of the perfect direct response letter. Let's begin with...

The Headline

First, consider the headline. There is always a headline of some sort for all sales letters. If you're sending out email sales letters, the "subject line" of the email would act as the headline.

The headline focuses the reader's attention on one quick benefit or promise (or two). It gives the reader a reason to spend valuable

time with your letter. It also helps close out other random thoughts and provides a context for what is about to follow.

Try to make a promise or allude to some key benefit. Refer in some way to the offer, perhaps in a subordinate line. Remember, the offer is what the reader will eventually act upon.

Try a "headline group." A headline, subhead and one, two or three short bulleted phrases that extend the headline message provides more information in a key location. It promotes greater involvement than one headline.

The Opening

The opening is the first sentence or first two sentences following the salutation. "I am writing to you about..." or "I want you to know about..." are not openings. Frankly, the reader doesn't care what you want. He cares about himself. This is a key place to say something about him or his needs which your product will gratify.

Most letters are won or lost in the first sentence. The **best way to lose** is to begin talking about yourself and your organization.

A phrase to keep in mind is, "Talk about my lawn, not your grass seed!" Another famous saying that speaks to this situation is:

> *"Tell me quick and tell me true or else, my friend to hell with you. Not how this product came to be, but what the damn thing does for me."*

Offer Preview

After the opening, make a brief reference to the offer:
"...and you can discover it, (prove it, enjoy it) FREE*, without obligation with the certificate enclosed."*

Now the reader knows you're not going to be asking him for

money. Maybe. The reader can relax. The response device begins to set up the response behavior.

It's also smart to "merchandise" the offer by referring to it at several points throughout the letter.

"When you send for your free demo and get it up and running, you'll quickly see..."

Sell Copy

From the offer preview, get right into the benefits that your reader will realize when he/she tests, previews, examines your product. Stay in second person throughout your letter.

You're talking to the reader (one person, not a market) about the reader, not you, and you're talking about yourself and your product only in terms of what it will do for reader.

Remember you're selling the offer, not the product. It's much easier to sell a 30-day trial, a free download of software or a free examination than it is to sell the product itself. You'll discuss payment terms later.

Try to lead off sentences and phrases with benefits.

"You'll make first-hand contact with hundreds of the most active, most involved sales prospects in the industry in just two short days..."

"As one of America's elite "Million-Plus" pharmacies, you are in a unique position to increase sales, slash operating costs and grow your business rapidly with xyz..."

Use Subheads To Introduce New Thoughts

To avoid eye-glazing, mind-numbing, wall-to-wall copy, use

subheads to introduce new thoughts and to move from one part of the letter to the next. Write in short sentences. Short paragraphs. Present a list of benefits or features in list form:

Each item
Preceded by
A bullet... instead of in a linear paragraph.

Use words of one syllable as much as possible. Don't assume that the person you're writing to is as literate as you are.

Even if he is, he's distracted, and he's trying to extract the key information he needs, often by just scanning your letter. Which is another good reason to use subheads...bulleted listings...and...ellipses.

Edit out unnecessary words and phrases and "write like you talk," assuming you can talk like a successful salesman. Clarity is more important than literary merit. The ability to sell is more important than the ability to write.

The Offer

When you've fully described the many ways your product will benefit the reader, show the reader how to acquire this fabulous program. Or, rather, how the reader can realize these benefits right NOW.

Spell out your offer in detail. What does the reader get? If you're offering a premium, this is the place to sell that a bit, too. You may also feature it in the brochure, if you have one, or in a separate premium flyer.

If at all possible, and if appropriate, date your offer. An expiration date helps to keep your package from going up between the lamp and the tape dispenser for further consideration.

Again, agreement doesn't do it. Only acting on that agreement right now results in sales.

The Guarantee

No one wants to make a mistake, especially not an expensive mistake. Relieve that fear with your guarantee.

By law you must refund legitimate requests up to 30 days anyway, so why not make it a virtue? Don't worry that your guarantee somehow sheds doubt on your product.

The guarantee speaks to your performance as a business person they can trust, not to your product.

But don't hawk it as a "Money Back Guarantee." or "Full Refund If Not Satisfied" kind of thing. That's negative.

A Free (or Risk-Free or No-Risk) 30-day Trial is the same thing, expressed in positive terms. *"Examine it, try it, use it for a full 30 days without risk."* That's an invitation, not a warning.

The Call To Action

Even after all that, you can't assume the reader will do what you want him to do, right now. But that's what he must do. So spell it out.

Does he "click here" to use an order form on your Web site or does he have to send out an email of some sort?

Does he complete a reply card, call a toll-free number, complete a questionnaire, check a box? Detach a reply card? What? Is there a postpaid or self-addressed reply envelope to use?

Ask the reader to do all that right now because that expiration date will be here before they know it. Because they really want to try

this, but if they let it go until "later," they will forget.

The P.S.

Punctuate the call to action with the signature, then add a P.S. After the headline and first sentence, the P.S. is the most read part of a direct response letter.

Use that important space to repeat a key benefit, or add a twist or an another idea to something you've already said. Also repeat your call to action here, in slightly different words.

The mnemonic for the basic function of all direct marketing, but especially for letters, is AIDA.

Get Attention.
Arouse Interest.
Stimulate Desire.
Prompt Action.

And it ain't over until the "fat lady" returns the order form, calls the toll free order line or fills out your order form and hits the submit button!

Article Written By Sam Robbins - Founder of CashFlowMarketing.com
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www.cashflowmarketing.com

Confession 7 -- Create A Swipe File And Copy It

Copying someone else's proven copy is without a doubt the quickest, easiest and most successful way of creating a sales letter. In fact, it's probably why the term copywriting was so coined… because everyone in the copywriting industry is guilty of it.

Even Dan Kennedy, arguably the most famous direct response copywriter in the world today, confessed to using this technique at his $1,000 a head copywriting seminar.

Now I am not talking about copying your competitor's sales letter word for word. That would be marketing suicide (although you could do this with a sales letter from another unrelated market).

What I am talking about is collecting a heap of sales letters that you know are successful and which you like, and copying elements from each of them to create your own. A collection of advertising material is known as a swipe file. Good copywriters have volumes of them in their reference library.

Want to write a powerful guarantee?… Look for one you like in your swipe file and copy it into your letter. Looking for an interesting opening?.... Search for one in your swipe file and Walla! Can't think of a headline?... Go to your swipe file and find hundreds at your disposal.

Some of the more popular elements copywriters look at include:

- Headlines
- Opening Paragraphs
- Question and Answers
- Proof
- Offers
- Pop Ups
- Java Script
- The PS, and
- Web Design Elements

Before you even pick up a pen, search for as many sales letters and advertisements as possible. Select only the pieces that utilize the techniques discussed in this manual, then file them in your 'swipe file' (there is a heap of crap out there so be careful what you chose).

Your swipe file will be your shortcut to creating the most powerful copy in your sales letter possible, so don't take this task lightly. Collect as many examples as you can from as many sources and markets as you can. Here are some great places to start your journey.

Web Page Sales Letters

Ok, this one is obvious. Since you are creating a web page sales letter, search for other web page sales letters which you can copy. Don't limit yourself to websites that only relate to your market. Look at sites in other markets as well. The more you collect, the easier your job will become later.

Of course, you can copy more than just copy from these sites. You can also copy things like autoresponder messages, design elements, HTML code, java script and so on.

Some great sites to start with are:

- Corey Rudl's Internet Marketing Centre pages (The sales page for Corey's 'Insider Secrets' course is the best web page sales letters I've seen, period.) – http://www.marketingtips.com/t.cgi/648471
- Dan Kennedy's Copywriting Seminar In A Box page – http://www.marketinggems.com/dankennedy.html
- Any of the SiteSell product pages – http://www.sitesell.com
- Any of the product pages at Mal Emery's sites – http://www.malemery.com and http://www.my.com.au
- Alexi Neocleous's Kaizen Marketing System page – http://www.kaizenmarketingsystem.com
- Brett McFall's Ad Secret's Revealed Website - http://www.adsecretsrevealed.com

Direct Mail Sales Letters

Subscribe to a number of mailing lists to get piles and piles of awesome material to add to your file. What I do is look at well written direct response print ads then phone up the companies and pretend to be an interested customer… I will then give my details and next thing you know, I am swamped with great letters.

Print Advertisements

Print ads are a fantastic resource for your sales letter. You can get great headlines from them, as well as openings, bullet points, hooks and guarantees etc.

Never throw out a newspaper or magazine without searching through them for additions to your swipe file. You will never read your newspaper and magazines the same way again. And so you shouldn't. The hidden gold is too good to throw away.

Specialty Magazines

Talk about fantastic resources… here's something that hardly anyone notices. When you are in your local shop next time, go to the magazine section and take a look at the front cover. There will be a whole list of headlines there promoting the articles inside.

I have got an old 'Muscle Builder' magazine in front of me and here's just some of the headlines on the front:

> **Giant Chest – 3 Muscle Maximizing Approaches**
> **Exclusive! Mr. Olympia's MASS & POWER Nutrition Program**
> **FREE PULLOUT! The Keys To Your Ultimate Workout**

Tell me these wouldn't make great headlines, sub headlines or bullet points in your sales letter.

Another great reference is the actual articles inside. They normally contain some of the best opening paragraphs you'll find. Of course, some will be boring and consequently useless to you. But others will be just what you are looking for.

Take a look through the specialty magazines that relate to your target market. You'll find headlines, sub headlines, bullet points and openings which you can basically copy word for word.

Also take a look at magazines that have nothing at all to do with your market, particularly the tabloids who have some of the best copywriters around working for them. You'll find some excellent samples to add.

Television Commercials

I was not initially concerned about television commercials for my swipe file. Then one day I saw an ad for the Australian '60 Minutes' program. The ad promoted a story about the disgusting treatment livestock receive when they are transported by ship from Australia to the Middle East for slaughter.

I cannot remember how the ad started, but right at the end there is a still picture of someone throwing a sheep from a ship into a truck with the voice over stating, "*And What Happens Next Is A National Disgrace*".

Now the story absolutely horrified me … but I immediately realized that the voice over could be turned into a really great headline or sub headline. Talk about intriguing joints. Anyone reading *"And What Happens Next Is A National Disgrace",* or an adaptation of, just could not help but be curious.

Have a good listen to the news promos and direct response commercials (the brand building commercials won't be much good to you). You will get some very powerful copy (particularly headlines) for your file.

Confession 6 -- Sell Your Product Benefits, Not Your Product Features

Successful copywriters promote the benefits customers get from their products, not just the product alone. When asked why he was so adept at writing direct response copy for O.M. Grass Seed, the copywriter Charles B. Scott replied:

> *"Because I like to talk about <u>your</u> lawn and not about my grass seed."*

Airlines sell vacations, not the air trip getting there. Designers sell fashions, not the practicality of clothing. Insurance firms sell security and peace of mind, not the paper contract is written on.

Elmer Wheeler, a sales motivator and writer, summed it up when he said, *"Sell the sizzle, not the steak!"*

People are only interested in how they <u>benefit</u> from your product, not your product <u>features</u>. This is the 'What's In It For Me' rule and translated, it means that you should always focus on benefits in your copy, not features.

Benefits sell because they solve problems. So packing your copy full of benefits goes a long way to making your copy more persuasive.

Features are still of course important. They explain why your benefits exist, which in turn build credibility behind your benefit statements. This is important. I often read sales letters which go on and on about benefits, but do not explain why these benefits exist. Consequently, the benefit claims just sound like unjustified hype.

When you write your letter, pack it full of benefits. Then back up any major benefits with a little 'reason why' copy to explain how the product features make these benefits possible.

You should know every single feature and benefit your product has to offer if you've done your homework right and followed the advice in Confession # 2.

The Inverted Benefit Pyramid

Before you start putting the benefits into your sales letter, arrange them in order of most important to your prospect down to least important. This is known as the inverted benefit pyramid in that all the big benefits are at the top of the list and all the little ones are at the bottom.

This is the basic order in which you should speak about the benefits in your letter. It will be the framework for your body copy. In fact, listing the benefits like this in order will make your job of writing a lot clearer. Just expand upon each benefit, or combine them together, and your letter will basically write itself.

Confession 9 -- Use An Interesting Attention Grabbing Headline To Start Your Prospect Reading

> <u>Fact # 1</u> -   **Five times more people read the headline than the body copy! That means 90% of your success lies in your headline!**
> <u>Fact # 2</u> –   **When your headline does not inspire your prospect, he will stop reading 80% of the time!**

A good headline will easily double or triple your results. In fact, copywriters like Ted Nicholas claim to have increased response by up to 1800% just by changing a headline on a sales piece.

1800%!... Imagine how you ecstatic you'd feel if your sales suddenly increased by 1800%!

Headlines are the most read and consequently, *most important part of your sales letter*! It plays the biggest role in determining whether your web page gets read or not.

Yet despite this fact, headlines are one of the most neglected areas online today. I come across sites without headlines all the time.

And how often do you come across a headline like this?

"Welcome to our website!"

Does this headline inspire you to read on? Of course not, it inspires you to click out!

Imagine how much more responsive visitors would be if they saw something like this instead:

"Announcing A New Technologically Advanced Laptop Computer That You Can Never Drop, Never Smash, and Never Lose…"

100% Guaranteed!"

I would honestly expect a headline like this to out pull the 'Welcome to our site' headline by at least 500%. It is attention grabbing, interesting and communicates a huge benefit to the visitor.

The other headline just says "Go away, I can't be bothered!"

Start By Writing At Least 100 Headlines

If you are serious about writing a successful sales letter, then focus the majority of your time on your headline. Good copywriters spend hours, sometimes days, just writing headlines.

You should do the same, and start by writing at least 100 headlines for each copywriting project (that's right… 100 headlines).

Then Split-Test Your Best Headlines

Once you have written 100 headlines, go through them all and choose the best ones. Get some unbiased help from your friends and family if you're unsure (preferably those who have an interest in what you are selling).

Now split test the best headlines against each other to see which one pulls the best response (we go into split testing a little later on).

The odds are that your first headline won't be your most profitable. Even if it is profitable, imagine getting 1800% more response simply from changing your headline?
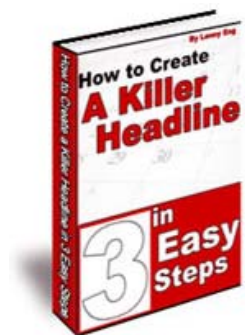
How To Create Killer Headlines That Sell In 3 Easy Steps

I just couldn't live with myself if I didn't go into creating headlines more in this ebook! It's the most important part of your sales letter!

That's why I'm going to throw in a _FREE_ copy of 'How To Create Killer Headlines That Sell In 3 Easy Steps'.

This ebook reveals how to quickly and easily create as many powerful headlines as you want. You'll never be stuck without a headline again! And the end result will be so powerful, you'll be absolutely gob smacked.

You'll also find descriptions on 15 different types of copywriting headlines including:

- The Benefit Headline
- The News Headline
- The Testimonial Headline
- The Case History Headline
- The Guarantee Headline
- The Personalized Headline
- The Direct Statement Headline
- The Question Headline
- The How-To Headline
- The Discount Sale Headline
- The Reasons Why Headline
- The Frustration/Problem Headline
- The Command Headline
- The Numbered Headline
- The Attachment Headline

Excited? You should be! This ebook took me months to create. I have spilt my own blood writing it. It will help you create powerful headlines in seconds rather than days!

I have actually sold this ebook for $17 to some very satisfied customers… But I am going to give it to you as a _FREE_ bonus for buying this ebook.

I mean, rather than regurgitate what I've written in my 'headline' ebook, I might as well just give it you as an extra bonus. You get a great tool for creating headlines and I save time editing the content into this section. We both win!

You can claim your *FREE* copy of this ebook by going to http://www.digital-copywriting.com/freebonus.html.

Confession 10 -- Create a Killer Opening Paragraph

You have inspired your prospects with your headline, now they are going to move on to your letter's opening. Like the headline, the opening must inspire your prospects to read more. Otherwise they will leave after a few seconds, simply out of lack of interest.

That is why most letters are won or lost in the first paragraph.

Here are some popular types of opening which you can use to get your readers started and really interested.

The News Opening

People are always interested in news, such as amazing new discoveries, revelations, exposé's and lost treasure. Sure, they don't sit around waiting for news, but when something newsworthy comes across their table about a subject they have an interest in, they tend to stop everything and listen.

You can capitalize on this fact by opening your letter with some kind of amazing news. For example, say your prospect has a problem with dandruff and he comes across this opening paragraph:

> Here's some great news for men and women who suffer form dandruff, itchy scalp and very dry hair. This new product actually…

Anyone with dandruff problems would be interested in what you have to say after reading this opening.

The Summary Opening

The summary opening basically sums up all your arguments in one paragraph with the intention of making your prospect's mouth water. For example, say your prospect is in to black magic and comes across this opening:

> Magic rituals unearthed after centuries… How to attract money and love… How to completely neutralize any kind of hate and protect yourself against aggression…

Anyone with an interest in black magic would find this opening very hard to ignore.

The Problem/Pain Opening

This opening is suited to the problem – agitate – solve formula discussed in Confession # 11. The opening basically starts by recreating your prospect's pain/problem so your prospect's desire to solve the problem becomes heightened.

For example, here is an opening aimed at people afraid of public speaking:

> You have to speak in front of a group of people. Suddenly your throat goes dry, your vocal chords start tightening up, and your thoughts wander all over the place.
>
> Someone compliments you on the way you look – all you can do is stammer some incomprehensible reply. People are looking at you – you blush and turn away.
>
> We've all felt this way at sometime or another…

If you were afraid of public speaking wouldn't you identify with this opening and read on? Of course you would.

The Story Opening

Stories are incredibly powerful when used in a sales letter. Why? Because they hook your prospects into reading your letter.

All human beings enjoy a good story. Tell an interesting one and your prospect will read every word to the very end. If your headline works, you should

capitalize on this and get them into a story as soon as possible. This is perhaps the best way to get your prospect to read your letter in its entirety.

Here is an example:

> One day I came home from work and Chanel had a book in her hand. She was reading! She was making the sounds of the characters. She was watching the videos. She was doing so many things at one time I could not believe it! Tears came to my eyes, and I said 'My daughter can read!!!...

The Question Opening

The question opening simply asks your prospect a question relating to his problem or about a benefit that your product offers. It eventually leads into an answer. It's one of the most common openings used.

Here is an example:

> Have you ever dreamed of becoming wealthy? Do you worry that you won't have enough left in retirement to pay your bills and be free from money worries? If so, drop everything and read this letter!

More Advice On Writing A Killer Opening

When you are creating your opening, keep these points in mind:

- The opening paragraph (also known as the lead) must instantly follow-up on the idea expressed in the headline. Otherwise, the prospect feels disappointed and will click out of your page.

- Don't waste your prospect's time with a warm up paragraph. He isn't convinced that your site is worth his effort yet. Get straight to the point.

- Always make the opening as interesting as possible to hook your prospects into reading on.

Confession 11 -- Use A Proven Sales Letter Formula

A lot of sales letters lose their prospects right after the headline and opening paragraph because their words don't "sell" the reader. Here are some very successful selling formulas you can follow to lead your prospect and get him salivating at the mouth.

AIDA

Almost everyone involved in marketing has heard of AIDA which is an acronym for Attention, Interest, Desire and Action. Here is how AIDA can be used in a sales letter.

> <u>Attention</u> – Alarm your prospect, create curiosity, or make a huge promise
> <u>Interest</u> – Tell a story
> <u>Desire</u> – Personalize the story to your prospect, then make a promise, offer, and guarantee
> <u>Action</u> – Close the sale, instruct what to do and create urgency.

Problem – Agitate – Solve – Prove – Close

This formula is an extension of the AIDA formula and is quite popular amongst copywriters. Here is how it works:

> <u>Problem</u> - Identifying your prospects problem at the beginning of the letter.
> <u>Agitate</u> – Agitate your prospect's problem so it seems as bad as possible.
> <u>Solve</u> – Solve your prospect's problem with your offer
> <u>Prove</u> - Prove and guarantee that your product solves your prospect's problem
> <u>Close</u> - Close the sale.

The AICPBSAWN Formula

This formula is another extension of the AIDA formula and comes from one of the best direct response copywriters in the business, Brian Keith Voyles. It's another popular formula amongst copywriters. Here's how it works.

> A=Attention - Say something that grabs your prospect's attention.
> I=Interest - Give your prospects a reason why they should be interested in what you have to say.
> C=Credibility - Tell your prospects why they should believe what you are saying is true.
> P=Prove - Prove what you're saying is true with testimonials, case studies, independent research etc.
> B=Benefits - List all the benefits your prospects get when doing business with you.
> S=Scarcity - Tell your prospects that your offer is only available for a limited time and use 'reason why' copy to make your prospects believe that the scarcity is real.
> A=Action - Explain exactly what your prospect has to do to take action.
> W=Warn - Warn them what the consequences are for not taking action.
> N=Now - Repeat your powerful offer and motivate your prospect to take action now.

Formula 3 – The Trudeau Formula

This formula comes from prominent direct response marketer Kevin Trudeau and is as follows:

> Promise + Example + Same Promise + Testimonial/Story + Same Promise + Premium First + Product Second

Confession 12 -- Use Sub-Headlines To Lead Your Prospect From One Section To Another

Before I start this subject, jump over to Confession # 41 and read about Professor Voegele's studies on sales letter readership. You will understand why sub headlines are so important to your sales letter.

They act as fixing points on your page and help get your letter read.

Use them to introduce important points and guide your visitors from one part of your letter to the next. Identify the main points/benefits you want to communicate in your letter, create sub headlines out of them and then expand on them in the preceding paragraphs.

By all means, follow the same rules that apply for headlines. Make them interesting so they compel your prospect to read the associated text with it.

Confession 13 -- Use Bullet Points To Create More Fixations

Bullet points are one of the most read pieces of your letter behind your headlines, sub headlines and P.S. They are a great way of creating fixations on your page and driving home important information to your readers.

There are two tricks to getting the most out of your bullet points. The first one is to use at least one bullet for every single benefit your product offers. This allows you to appeal to the differing wants of each of your readers. You could even reinforce these benefits by repeating them in a different way at various sections throughout your page.

The second trick is to write them so that they read like read little headlines. Don't waste the readership bullet points get by making them boring and uninspiring. Capitalize on the readership they gain by driving home your product benefits.

Here are some incredibly persuasive bullet formulas which you can plug right into.

How to get _____!
How to have _____!
How to make _____ even if you can't _____!
How you can improve _____!
Seven simple ways to _____!
The insider secrets to _____!
5 almost magic ways to _____!
Stop _____ without expensive _____!
The absolute best time to _____!
End your _____!
How to avoid the 12 biggest _____ mistakes!
The jealously guarded secret of _____!
The no-lose way to _____!
The truth about _____!
6 facts you must know about _____!

A simple technique for _____!
The quickest and easiest way to _____!
Why almost everyone is dead wrong about _____!
An easy 4-step system to _____!
The sure-fire way to _____!
7 startling truths about _____!
How I fooled _____ into _____!
Stealth _____ tactics I use to _____!
The tiny adjustment to _____ that _____ by _____!
Why the _____ that most people use are a waste of time!
The little known blockbuster technique that will _____!
The 3 most common mistakes made by _____ that _____!
Guaranteed ways to increase _____, boost _____ and make more _____!
The most important thing you could ever discover about _____!
An incredibly powerful psychological trigger that gets _____!
A dirty little secret many _____ hope you never find out!
The NUMBER ONE rule that absolutely must be observed when _____ … break this and you could be in severe _____ stress!
A sneaky … but incredibly smart way … to have _____ throwing money at you – and literally pushing other buyers out of the way to sign the deal - BEFORE They've Even _____!
The stupid _____ which could send your _____ into a death roll ... and the worst part is - you won't even see it coming!

Confession 14 -- Appeal To Your Prospect's Emotional Side Whilst Providing Logical Reasons To Buy

If you asked someone why they purchased a product, they would probably say *"Because I need it."* But when you investigate the actual thought processes that took place prior to the purchase, you'll probably find that very little logic was used in the decision making process at all.

That's because "98% of all human beings purchase products for emotional reasons, then try to justify the purchase logically."

This means that you need to 'sell' by appealing to the emotional side of your prospect. This is where the game is really won and lost.

But you also have to provide rational arguments to buy so your prospect can justify the purchase logically.

According to Robert Boduch in his book "Great Headlines Instantly", there are 6 primary motivators of human action:

1. Gain or Greed
2. Love
3. Self-Indulgence
4. Self-Preservation
5. Pride
6. Duty

To appeal to your prospect's emotional side, you need to center your appeal on one or all of these motivators. Here's an example of all 6 of these motivators in use from a single letter by Brian Keith Voyles for 'Read Now!' a children's reading aid product.

Gain or Greed

> And studies prove that parents who set time out to read to their young children significantly enhance their children's learning ability! If that sounds like what you're after… then you're in the right place at the right time!

Love

> If you know a child and you want to give them the most important gift they'll ever receive, Read Now! is the best choice you could make.

Self Indulgence

> Well it was a real treat for me to come home from work everyday and read with him before he went to sleep. If you could put that in a bottle… it really is priceless!

Self Preservation/Fear

> Statistics show that 35 percent of American children begin kindergarten totally unprepared for the experience… you really can't afford for your child to be part of that percentage. The effects are long lasting and dramatic. In fact, 13 percent of all 17-year olds are functionally illiterate…

Pride

> One day I came home from work and Chanel had a book in her hand. She was reading!
>
> She was making the sounds of the characters. She was watching the videos. She was doing so many things at one time I could not believe it! Tears came to my eyes, and I said 'My daughter can read!!!...

Duty/Guilt

> You owe it to your child to get them ready for school by teaching them to read.

Rational Reasons

The same letter also offers rational reasons to purchase so their prospects can justify the purchase with logical arguments.

> Other Benefits Include:
>
> Read Now! is the only reading program that has received the Film Advisory Board Award of Excellence for Outstanding Achievement in Learning!
> It's not just phonetics. Read Now! also uses animation, music, stories and live action to teach 180 key words that unlock the English language for your child!
> The words appear on the screen so your child can see them, the voice of the lovable characters sound them out so you child can match the sounds to the words… it's fantastic!
>
> Your child will have so much fun learning with Sam that their rate of learning will be faster, with better results, and with minimal help from you.
>
> Read Now! is a multimedia interactive program that is simple, easy to use, and doesn't take your time as a parent! Not only that, it's a tremendous value!

Confession 15 -- Write Inspiring Copy To Compel Readership

Nothing stops a prospect from reading your letter more than uninspiring copy. While you do not have to be a 'word-smith' to write a good sales letter, you should at least aim to make it palatable for your readers to enjoy.

Interesting copy means more reading. It is like a good book you cannot put down. Here are some basic techniques to help you 'spruce up' your copy and improve the 'quality' of your words.

I also strongly recommend you getting 'Secrets To Creating Net Ads That Sell' (http://www.marketinggems.com/netads.html) by Bob Silber. This book changed the way I wrote copy and focuses purely on, as Bob puts it, *'Surviving the belly of the beast'* to become *'A master presentation writer'*. There's nothing about testimonials headlines etc here… it's just about improving your writing skills to make your words sell.

Write In A Conversational Tone

When a salesman speaks to a prospect, he speaks in a conversational tone. It is how we as humans communicate. If you can translate that same tone on to paper, then you will humanize your communication and do well.

Don't worry about correct grammar. It doesn't matter as long as your copy reads like a conversation.

The Tape Recorder Technique

One of the easiest ways of achieving this is to tape record yourself (or a professional salesman) selling your product as if you were speaking to a real person. After you have finished, simply transcribe your speech into the written word, clean up all the errors and give it a bit of polish. Your copy will be as clear as a bell, and your writing time will be slashed by half.

My 'Hey Bazza' Technique

Another technique which you can use is to sit down and type up your letter like you were writing it to a friend. I call this my 'Hey Baz!' technique.

Baz is my good friend Barry who always emails me 101 questions about Internet marketing and copywriting. Whenever I type a reply to Barry's questions, I automatically write it as if I was *talking to him face to face*.

When I realized this, I began using it in my own copywriting… that is, I wrote my copy as if I was writing an email to Barry. My copy became a lot warmer and credible as a result (you tend to avoid all the hype when you explain things to friends).

Write So A 6th Grader Could Read It Without Stumbling

I heard a while ago that journalists write to the eighth grade level. I've since heard they now write to the sixth grade level. That is because studies have shown most people read at this level… even in the most sophisticated markets.

You should therefore write to around the 6th grade level. If you have access to a sixth grader, I'm sure he'd be thrilled to earn a couple of bucks to read your letter out loud, as I'm sure you will be when you find how readable your letter is.

Avoid Technical Jargon

Avoid technical jargon at all costs. Jargon will lose your prospects, even in the most technical markets.

I know of one case where a copywriter re-wrote the highly technical sales literature of a data base development company into layman's terms. The result was an increase in sales of more than 400%!

Avoid The Hype

This is the biggest mistake made by copywriting first timers. Their messages are just too hyped up. Hype does not sell, in fact it only damages your credibility and serves as a turn off to your readers.

If you want to kill the hype in your letters, follow these guidelines:

- Avoid using the ! in excess. While it can be used in certain instances to great effect, too many of these in a letter will spoil your credibility. Use them only like you would in an email to a friend and don't go overboard.

- Avoid the overuse of superlatives. Like Joe Robson says in 'Make Your Words Sell':

    "Too many SUPERLATIVES in your BRILLIANT SALES MESSAGE will produce less of the AMAZING PROFITS you can EASILY GENERATE if you choose to write FANTASTIC PROFITS MAKING HYPE-FREE Sales Copy for your MIND BLOWING gizmo!!!!!!!!"

- Avoid the overuse of text highlighting. We speak about the importance of text highlighting later in Confession # 41, and while it is important to highlight some text, don't go overboard.

- Write as if you were writing to a friend. A conversation with a friend comes across much more genuinely and honest than a conversation with a salesman. Use my 'Hey Bazza' technique to help you facilitate this.

Never Use The Same Word Twice In The Same Sentence

Let me rephrase that…

"Never Use An Identical Word In The Same Sentence."

Wouldn't you agree that the rephrased version reads with more pizzazz than the first one? If you are stuck for an alternative word, use a thesaurus. Bob Silber calls the thesaurus one of the *'tools you must have before you even think about being proficient at writing a master sales presentation'* for this very reason.

Use Similes As Descriptors

Adding little figures of speech, or similes as they're otherwise known, to describe something makes your copy sound much more interesting than without. Brian Keith Voyles calls this the *'salt and pepper of advertising'* as it gives your copy that little bit of extra spice.

Here are some examples with the similes highlighted so you know what I'm talking about:

> "Oh sure, you'll see products that look like ours, that are packaged like ours… but if they don't carry our official seal, they're rip offs, and they're <u>as phony as a $3 bill</u>."

> "Once you try our new herbal formula, your outlook on life will have you <u>flying higher than a kite.</u>"

> "Let me tell you, these 25 carat gold teddy bear ear rings are <u>as cute as a bug</u>, and the glimmer they give off will make you <u>look like a million dollars.</u>"

> "The Scott Bodell Skin Care System will rejuvenate your skin, and have it feeling as <u>soft as a baby's bottom</u> in 30 days or less, or you get your money back!"

Use The Attraction Of A Celebrity

Major advertisers spend millions of dollars a year paying top celebrities to endorse their products for one good reason… people are attracted to anything associated with them.

Well you probably can't afford to pay a superstar to endorse your product, but you can use these two tricks which are almost as effective.

Celebrity Similes

We spoke before about how similes make your copy more interesting. Well the celebrity similes are 10 times as interesting. People just can't help but to find out more when they see them.

If you use celebrity similes in your letter, try to put them in your sub headlines so you gain maximum readership and benefit from them. Here are some examples of some celebrity similes in action.

"Start Hitting Home Runs Like Mark McGwire"

"Slam Dunk The Competition Like Michael Jordan"

"Get Noticed Like A Bikini Clad Cindi Crawford"

Celebrity Stories

Another trick is to use a story of a celebrity in your letter. People just can't help but read them.

The story should of course relate to your product so as to get some benefit out of it. You won't have any hassles with this as long as the story is true, and doesn't make any kind of false endorsement of your product.

Probably the best example I've seen of this in action comes from Alexi Neocleous's 'About Us' page (he's called this page 'Alexi's Story'). Here Alexi speaks about his dealings with a high profile Australian stock broker by the name of 'Rene Rivkin'.

Now to anyone not from Australia, let me tell you that Rene Rivkin is one of the most famous businessmen in this country. When I visited Alexi's site, I began clicking through the various pages on his site before I came across the Rene Rivkin story.

Once I began reading it, I couldn't stop. I was so curious as to what happened between Alexi and Rene that I must have stayed on this page for about 5

minutes. How many 'About Us' pages have you stayed at for longer than 10 seconds? Not many I'm guessing, so you'll understand why 5 minutes is a very long time. And it was all due to the Rene Rivkin story.

Go to Alexi's site and visit his 'Alexi's Story' page to see what I mean – http://www.kaizenmarketingsystem.com.

Avoid Negative Words

You should avoid the use of negative words in your letter. They really turn your reader off and force him to either skip past them ('filters') or heaven forbid, stop reading altogether.

For example, the word *'order'* is a negative word. However, totally stopping its use is usually unavoidable, you should try to use a more positive alternative, such as *'invest'*, wherever possible. I won't go into all the negative words here because I have attached an excellent report by Chris Bloor on the subject - 'Words That Lose Money, Words That Make Money'.

Another excellent resource relating to this subject is the 'Words That Trigger Automatic Response' ebook that comes as part of the Make Your Words Sell (http://myws.sitesell.com) package.

Provide Education

This is another little trick to getting your letter read. Simply provide some educational information and tie it in with your letter. This works on the principle of 'Commitment and Consistency' where people want to finish anything they start.

You will find an excellent example of this at Brett McFall's website at http://www.adsecretsrevealed.com. Here, Brett provides *'5 Little-Known Secrets To Get Your Sales Taking Off Like A 747'* in his copy. In fact, these 'secrets' make up half his sales letter.

Confession 16 -- Use Mental Engagement To Reduce Resistance To Your Statements

Here is an interesting fact. When people read statements in an advertisement, they naturally feel some degree of resistance towards it, regardless of how truthful the statement is.

After all, advertisements are written by greasy salesman whose ulterior motives are to sell you something, right? Well that's at least the view from your prospect who doesn't know you from a lick of salt!

So what can you do to lower your reader's natural resistance to your statements?

Simple! Let your prospects come to their own conclusion. They will always believe something they have worked out themselves over the word of a salesman! This technique is known as 'Mental Engagement'.

Mental engagement works on the theory that the more the brain works to reach a conclusion, the more positive, enjoyable or stimulating the experience, and the more agreeable he becomes towards it.

Here are three truly magic 'mental engagement' techniques you can use to lower resistance and hypnotize your prospects into agreeing with you!

Reword Statements Into Agreement Questions

Firstly, you can reword a statement so that it asks a question. This is known as an _agreement question_ and they put your reader into a 'yes' trance, conditioning them to agree with your statement.

For example, let's look at this statement:

> Children who learn how to read before they get into school have higher self images.

Even though this statement may be true, it will be met some degree of natural resistance from its readers because it has been expressed as a statement. But have a look what happens when we reword this statement into a question.

> Think about it… if your child can read before they get into the mainstream of school, their self image is going to carry them a long, long way isn't it?

The statement and question both communicates the same message, but the question _tricks_ the reader into _thinking_ about the answer. And when the reader comes up with the answer himself, he believes the answer to be truthful. Resistance to this statement is therefore eliminated.

Use Stories To Encourage Vicarious Learning

Another way to lower the resistance level of your reader is to reword your statement into a _story_. Take a look at this story for example:

> One day I came home from work and Chanel had a book in her hand. She was reading!
>
> She was making the sounds of the characters. She was watching the videos. She was doing so many things at one time I could not believe it! Tears came to my eyes, and I said 'My daughter can read!!!...

When people read this story, they understand the pride and joy that this mother must have felt when she first discovered her daughter reading. This is called '_vicarious learning',_ that is, learning through other people's experiences. Imagine how effective this story would have been if it was just expressed as _"You'll be so proud of your child when they begin to read."_

The story _tricks_ the reader into feeling an emotional response, whereas the statement tells the reader to what they are going to feel. Which one do you think is more persuasive and memorable?

When you tell a story, try to use '_sensory modality_' to stir up a higher level of emotion. Sensory modality relates to senses such as smell, sight, sound, touch,

taste and feel. So describing a combination of these senses (and not just sight) induces readers to experience your story at a deeper level.

Paint A Picture With Your Prospect In It

Another way to lower the resistance level of your reader is to paint a picture of them experiencing your benefit or pain. This technique is known as *imagery*. Here is an example from a sales letter by Mal Emery:

> Imagine this - Next Monday morning instead of fighting the rush hour traffic to get to work, you call the advertising manager of a small magazine… and tell him or her that you want to place an ad in their next issue!
>
> She quotes you the standard rate and after some simple negotiations, agrees to run the ad for 35% less than the original quote. And when your ad runs, it is seen by over 100,000 readers for the magazine.
>
> Within a matter of days, many of those readers begin placing orders for products you are offering.
>
> Checks, money orders, credit card orders and even cash begins to fill your mail box everyday… whether you're waiting excitedly at the post office or still in the shower or walking along the beach, it makes no difference because your business is cranking in the money no matter where you are or what you are doing!
>
> And here's the real awesome part, by the end of the month, if you've received just one order a day, you've earned $7,170.00! Now if all this sounds too good to be true, you must read on because it's very possible that your life is about to change completely for the better.

Wouldn't you agree that this is much better than simply stating *"You'll make $7,170 a month!"* I know which one I'd rather quote in my sales letter!

Agreement questions, story telling and imagery are all extremely powerful techniques! I seriously recommend you use them to create thought provoking,

interesting copy that hypnotizes your prospect to agree with your statements and experience your product benefits. It's a real miracle worker – believe you me!

Confession 17 -- Use 'You' Derivatives Instead Of 'I-We' Derivatives

Professor Voegele's studies (refer to Confession # 41 for more information) discovered a very intriguing and important fact about the words 'you' and 'I'. He found that readers are much more likely to read a portion of text when they see the word 'you' in it, than when they see the word 'I'.

According to Professor Voegele, second person singular and plural pronouns (you) and their derivatives (your, you're, yours etc) are 're-enforcers' which encourage readership, while singular and plural pronouns (I-we) and their derivatives (my, mine, our, ours etc) are 'filters' which discourage readership.

So does this mean that you shouldn't use 'I-we' derivatives at all in your sales material? Of course not! You need to use the word 'I' in your testimonials, endorsements and stories etc.

But if you do use 'I-we derivatives', here are some rules to follow:

- If possible, only use 'I-we' derivatives in testimonials, endorsements and story telling.

- Convert any unnecessary 'I-we' derivatives to 'you' derivatives.

- If you have to use 'I-we' derivatives, follow up immediately after with 'you' derivatives to tell your prospect what it all means to them.

- After writing your sales letter, do a count of how many times 'I-we' derivatives appear compared to 'you' derivatives. Ultimately, you should aim for a balance of around 75% 'you' and 25% 'I-we'.

The following example demonstrates how to use 'I-we' derivatives (if there is no other way) in your copy.

'You' derivatives appears 6 times in the final paragraph to spell out what all the benefits mean for the prospect.

'I-we' derivatives appears 8 times in the first 2 paragraphs. This is acceptable as these paragraphs contain a testimonial-story to communicate the benefits.

Of course, I didn't just keep on doing amusing experiments. The very next day, I put my new found faculty to work for me, and was soon able to remember everything I read, heard and saw (including musical scores, the names and faces of people I'd only met once, their addresses, telephone numbers and all my appointments etc.) with incredible accuracy. I even learned to speak a foreign language (French) in four months!

If I've obtained some measure of success and happiness in this life, I owe it all to this book, which revealed the secrets of how my brain works.

I'm sure you too would like to be able to exploit this amazing mental power, which is your most precious possession, and use it to make your life a success. As an introduction to his complete method, the author, W.R. Borg, would be happy to send you a copy of the Laws of Eternal Success, a booklet that tells you a lot more about his discovery than I can in this short letter. The offer is available to anyone who wishes to improve his or her memory.

Confession 18 -- Use Long Copy, Not Short

There is a big misconception that says people won't read long copy. Well I'll quote what Brian Keith Voyles says about this:

> *"It's pure baloney"...*

And you won't find many people with more copywriting experience than Brian.

People with an interest in fishing generally read anything they can get their hands on about fishing, right? And doesn't the same apply to people interested in Australian Rules football, basketball, golf, soccer, sewing, gardening, designer clothes, cooking and so on?

Then you'd probably agree that people interested in your particular subject, will probably read anything you write to him about that subject, right? As long as the letter is interesting.

Don't be afraid to write pages and pages of copy. Just write as much as it takes to make your case for buying. It doesn't matter whether that case takes 2 paragraphs to write, or 10 pages.

Then sprinkle the 'salt and pepper' outlined in the rest of this manual (e.g. A compelling offer, you derivatives, celebrity stories and similes and so on) and you're prospect won't be able to pull himself away from his monitor.

If you are still unsure, split test a long letter against a short one and see which one pulls more. I'll put my money on the long letter.

Remember, your sales letter can never be too long. It can only be too boring.

Confession 19 -- Make An Offer Your Prospect Can't Refuse

Except for changing the product itself, nothing can make as big a difference to your sales letter than the proposition.

Changes in the price, payment options, bonuses and guarantees will show more dramatic results than most changes in copy and layout.

Remember this rule:

"The Substance Of The Offer Far Outweighs The Form Of Presentation!"

There are exceptions to this rule, but more often than not this rule will be true. So spend just as much time creating your offer as you do writing your letter.

Here some propositions which you can use to really give your letter a thump in response.

Product Propositions

Here are two techniques which you can use to add a 'twist' to your product, to make your offer more compelling.

Premium/Bonuses

Bonuses are probably the easiest and most used propositions of all. And for one good reason… they work the best.

How persuasive can they be?

Well I once saw Australian direct response marketer Mal Emery auction off a Mars Bar for $23,000, all on the back of the bonuses he offered with it.

Dan Kennedy also tells a story where a 'coffee cup' premium resulted in the biggest boost in sales of an information product he was selling. No matter how much testing Dan did, nothing out pulled more than the 'coffee cup' offer.

This should prove to you how powerful bonuses can be.

Bonuses work because they 'value add' your product and increase your prospect's level of desire for your offer. This is often all that's needed to tip your prospect over the edge to order.

Bonuses also become more important as the price of your product increases. High prices mean high purchasing risk. So the more valuable your offer is, the easier your prospect can justify the purchase.

There are also times when your bonuses serve as the primary motivator for a purchase. In other words, people only buy your product to get the bonuses!

This is true in the newsletter business where most people struggle to see enough benefit in a newsletter to justify a purchase. Newsletter publishers therefore offer a huge number of bonuses to induce a sale, knowing that the majority of subscribers will only subscribe to get the bonuses, then stay subscribed out of laziness to cancel.

If you use bonuses, try to follow these rules to get full persuasive impact from them:

Use bonuses that have a high-perceived value. The more valuable the bonus, the more persuasive they become. In my opinion, information products make the best bonuses. They can be reproduced for very little and come with a high degree of perceived value.

Try to include more than just one bonus in your offer. Offer as many as you can to really get your prospect's mouth watering. This strategy is known as 'bonus overload' and works a treat.

Don't just list the bonuses in dot points. Describe them in great detail following the rules outlined in this manual (e.g. Specific benefit statements, bullet points, 'You' derivatives etc). Hammer home how important your bonuses will be to

you prospects if they order. The bigger the perceived benefit, the more desirable they appear.

Here is an example of bonuses driving sales from Ken Evoy's 'Make Your Knowledge Sell' site:

Tool #1: Make Your Knowledge Sell!

What more can I say about it?

It's already becoming the bible on how "everyman" / "everywoman" can write and publish profitable info products.

What book could possibly compete? Well, "compete" isn't exactly the right word, but, young Skywalker, there is another...

Tool #2: "eBook SECRETS: How To Create & SELL Your Own Profitable eBooks On The Web", by Ken Silver

We're including this 420-page best-seller because Mr. Silver's massive book works with MYKS! wonderfully.

Ken Silver is an old hand at marketing, formally trained in it before going out on his own, and with a long history of off-line direct mail success. Ken is more conservative, has a different perspective, and has a lot of his own valuable ideas. Monique has more "youthful passion," I guess you'd say.

MYKS! and eBook Secrets are a perfect fit for each other -- like two hands pulling together. Want to double-check something? Need a second expert opinion? Ken's book, newly updated for MYKS!, is what to pull out of your ToolKit.

Tool #3: 186 Places To Promote and Sell Your Information Product Online

Promotional strategies that get the blaze going. Knowing how to promote your information product is the single most important skill for successfully generating sales galore. It's like the match that you drop onto lighter-fluid-soaked coals.

Use this tool to promote your info product like a rifle shot... er, make that a flame thrower!

How hot you want to make that fire is entirely up to you.

All the legwork has been done. Everything you need to know to make each resource work for you.

Monique used to sell this tool herself. It was a key part of her $269 collection of printed manuals. Now it's a tool in your toolbox.

Tool #4: 120 New Places To Promote and Sell Your Information Product Online

New and updated, these income sources are totally hot! As soon as Monique and I agreed that her "186 Places" simply had to be in our MYKS! package, she immediately decided to supplement it with new places and some significant updates.

A total of over 300 resources...

... No mere bookmarks, either -- you'll get detailed descriptions and strategies for using other people's online bookstores, newsletters, ebook publishers, discussion groups and other info product-specific resources to light your promotional fire!

Tool #5: The Online Info Seller's Jump Start Kit

Here's the meticulous planning document every infopreneur should have. Most people simply never get around to creating something like this for themselves. Their loss, your gain. Because here it is, an irreplaceable reference document, ready and waiting.

What's in it? An organized collection of planning tools and reminders that make it virtually impossible for you to go wrong. Comprehensive checklists for designing Web sites, creating e-zines, and other information products:

- Weekly Action Plans
- Master Marketing Module
- Weekly Progress Report Form
- Templates, guides, and more.

All of the tools in the Jump Start Kit integrate with one another. They all add up to a system within the MYKS! system... a proven and powerful resource that gets great results.

It's so valuable, Monique still sells the printed version of the Jump Start Kit for US$87 from her site. She wrote me...

> Hi Ken,
>
> I know that including this is going to cut into the number of $87 sales at my own site, but I agree -- if the **MYKS!** package is to be the single best resource for creating marketing and selling info products on the Net, the Jump Start Kit simply **has** to be in it! It's such an **essential tool** for success!
>
> Regards,
> Monique
>
> Agreed. You simply can't, and won't, omit anything important if you do this. All you have to do is check it. And do it.
>
> What could be more valuable than that?
>
> Glad you asked...

Tool #6: My special Report on Reprint Rights, including a professionally written Reprint Legal Agreement

Reprint rights income made easy... whether you're buying or selling!

Some people aren't familiar with the reprint rights concept -- I certainly wasn't so let me briefly explain.

There are a lot more people who want to sell a book than have the know-how or interest for writing one. **Sell them the reprint rights to your info product.**

Depending on the topic and the audience, you could get up to $1,000 from each person who wants to purchase the rights. If you set a maximum of 30 people who are allowed to buy reprint rights, that's a quick $30,000 in your pocket!

Create three info products a year, and this adds up to a pretty good annual income. My report shows you how -- this is totally original material that you will read **only in this report.**

On the other hand, let's say you want to buy reprint rights. The special report shows you how to find them, negotiate and buy them, and then improve and package them, in totally original and uniquely profitable ways. Again, these techniques are described **only in this report.**

Right now a small number of sophisticated professionals do this on a regular basis. I do it. Ken Silver does it. You can do it, too.

But whoa! Look what I've found...

I was surprised -- no, I was **flabbergasted**! -- to find a lot of people buying and selling rights **on a handshake basis**. This is admirable, but when I told my lawyer about this, he started spinning in his grave -- er, crypt. Whatever.

Listen, the point of all this is to publish your ebook in a **professional, profitable** way. It wouldn't be professional of **me** to let you negotiate rights worth thousands of dollars without an appropriate legal agreement. After all, if you treat this right, you are really buying or selling a business.

So, with the benefit of all our collective experience, and after about $1,000 worth of my lawyer's time, we drafted a professional general-purpose **Reprint Agreement** that you and your own legal advisor can use to tailor to suit your own needs. Use it to help

protect yourself whether you're buying reprint rights or selling them.

You won't find this agreement anywhere else on the Internet!

This special report, with all its unique buying and selling strategies and with the professionally drafted agreement, is **more** than another tool in your ToolKit. It's an **entire pull-out drawer** of devices to use!

Tool #7: The MYKS! Automation Manual, including a $500 Software Coupon

Picture this...

You've followed the guidance in **MYKS!**, you've published your info product, people are coming to your website.

Now the key is automating your order-processing and delivery. Automation is where your business really takes off!

Automation is a mystery to most online entrepreneurs. But it's so important that we've **created a separate manual** just for this. No matter what your personal situation or resources, this manual points you in the right direction for automating.

For example...

Are you the kind of person who would like to control your own business from A to Z? Automating could cost you $5,000 - $10,000. But we've put together an exclusive deal with a company that automates your whole online order-taking and delivery process. It enables you to sell your info product automatically, with zero effort from you.

With the MYKS! $500 coupon, the cost will be exactly $1,000 for those MYKS! owners who want to keep it all "in-house." Want to grow your info-business even faster? The installation even includes your own affiliate-management software. (We have no financial relationship with this company and every other one of their

customers pays $1,500 for the same installation.)
If automating on your own is beyond your reach or simply does not interest you, the manual really comes into its own. It tells you exactly how to automate order-processing-and-delivery, no matter what your personal resources, abilities, and desires...

Can't get your own merchant account? No problem. After you read the manual, you'll blow past this barrier.

Want another company to do it all for you? Sure. We'll show you the best companies to use.

Do you have your own merchant account and are simply looking for a good third-party company to handle the technical side? Right. We've got this covered.

Here's the bottom line. No matter how you want to do it, you can! No matter what your situation, the Automation Manual frees you up from the menial tasks so that you can focus on the interesting stuff.

Tool #8: A free half-hour personal telephone consultation with Monique Harris!

You've read her advice, followed it, and you still have a question? Ask her yourself! Save this phone call until you've gone completely through the book, checked the rest of our ToolKit, and have some really good questions! Get your half-hour's worth!

Do I really need to say that this part of the offer is for a limited time? Everybody says that, but here the reason is pretty obvious... Monique will quite likely be swamped.

Monique Harris is a personable lady who enjoys teaching and helping others succeed.

But she's only human, and any half-hour could be worth hundreds of dollars to her (and to you!). There's only so much time in the day. So we might have to remove Monique's time from the ToolKit very

> soon.
>
> If you buy today, though, there's no time limit on when you can take advantage of this opportunity. The right to one free half-hour consultation is yours.

Basic vs Deluxe Packages

This technique works on the principle of 'Commitment and Consistency' where people have a strong tendency to remain faithful to something they have committed to.

This tactic is often used by automobile salesmen who get customers to commit to a price and then say *"I have to get the sales manager's approval first"*. At this point the consumer has psychologically committed to buying the car. The salesman, after supposedly taking the offer to the sales manager, returns and declares that the manager would not accept the price. The consumer, now committed to owning the car, will often then increase the offer until the sale is made.

You can use a more ethical approach to this tactic instead by offering both a basic and deluxe version of your product in your letter. The objective is to get your prospect to commit to purchasing the basic version first. Once committed, your prospects will then often think, '*Well if I'm going to spend money anyway, I might as well fork out a few dollars more and get the deluxe version instead*.' This often results in a 30% to 80% increase in sales.

To make this work, the basic version has to be attractive enough for your prospect to commit to. The deluxe version then has to be that much more attractive that your prospect will be encouraged to up-sell himself to get it.

Another alternative to this technique is to just offer the basic version on the sales letter. Then, when your prospect decides to order, you offer him your deluxe version at the point of purchase (e.g. the order form). This works wonderfully well for the 'Web Position Gold' software site at http://www.webposition.com where the basic software program is offered from the sales page, before the upgrades (which you need to have) are offered at the order form.

You could also flip this technique and offer the deluxe version on your sales letter, then use a pop up to offer the basic version if prospects leave your site without ordering. Go to http://www.amazingpopups.com and see how they have used this technique.

Payment Propositions

Payment propositions can be even more effective than product propositions. Unfortunately, they come with a downside in that they carry a certain degree of financial risk to you the seller.

Nevertheless, they can be extremely powerful if used correctly and the benefit can far outweigh the cost. Just test them carefully if you use them to ensure you gain the biggest benefit from them.

Free Trial Offers

This is perhaps the most persuasive offer of them all! You will see sales skyrocket through the roof when you use it.

Here you basically state to your prospect that 'I believe in my product so much that I am willing to let you get it, use it, try it, read it and/or examine it for X days before you decide to return or pay for it.'

To make this offer work, you really need to have a good product. Otherwise returns will come flooding back in. And even if your product is good, you'll still get a number of returns, along with the possible legal problems in reshipping the 'used' merchandise to other customers.

Regardless of these problems though, the increased number of sales you get will often justify the small number of returns.

You can also reduce the number of returns by making this offer conditional. For example, you could make your offer *'conditional upon acceptance',* giving you the option of declining orders to customers if they fail a credit check.

You could also make your offer *'conditional to US residents only'* (US is an example) to stop people from other countries from ripping you off.

Perhaps the least risk conditional offer of all and one which I see quite regularly is *'conditional only if postage is met by the purchaser'* where customers have to meet all postage costs associated with sending and returning the product if it is returned.

Another less risky offer could be *'conditional to credit card purchases only'* where you do not have to rely on your customer to send you money at the end of the trial period.

If you use a conditional offer, just be sure to mention them in your letter to prevent complaints and legal issues from arising.

Installment Plans

Installment plans are another way to make you offers more persuasive. Unfortunately, they come with the risk that your customers may miss a payment. The most common application of the installment plan is a simple 3 or 4 part billing, usually combined with a trial offer.

However the risk may be negligible if your product is cheap to produce (e.g. Information products) and the first installment that is payable up front covers the cost of your product.

You can also reduce the risk of someone missing an installment by making your offer conditional so installments must be paid *'through direct debit of a bank account or credit card only'*.

Cash On Delivery Offers

Cash on delivery (COD) sales allows your customers to pay for your product upon delivery. This is a great way to reduce your customer's purchasing risk, but comes at a great risk to you the seller.

COD requires extensive and costly paperwork. More importantly, refusals tend to be excessive for several reasons. Sometimes the customers don't have the cash

when the order is delivered. Other times, no one is home and it is too much trouble to arrange redelivery or to pick up the package at the post office. But more often than not, your customer's impulse to buy has cooled off and he longer wants it.

Even when the COD cost is passed on to the customer, the refusal rate is generally so high that it may not be worth the hassle and cost to you.

Guarantee Propositions

Guarantees are used to reduce your customer's purchasing risk. But you can also use them to boost your sales by including an offer with it. This technique is known as *'risk reversal'* and it works because your customers receive a benefit, regardless of whether the product is returned or not.

(Note, this is not a full discussion on guarantees as we talk about them in more detail later in this manual).

Double Your Money Back Guarantees

Instead of offering a standard 'Money Back Guarantee', you could offer a 'Double Your Money Back Guarantee' where you offer to pay twice the product cost to your customer if it is returned.

While some people abuse this offer, the resultant extra sales that you achieve will usually see you coming out ahead (as long as you sell a good product).

You can reduce your risk by making this offer 'conditional' and combining it with a 'Results Guarantee'.

For example, you can say that your 'Double Your Money Back Guarantee' is only applicable if your customers - (1) undertake certain actions outlined with your product (e.g. used 3 techniques outlined in this manual), and (2) still don't receive the results promised. This kind of conditional offer greatly reduces your financial risk whilst still providing a boost to your sales.

Like all conditional offers, make sure the conditions are spelled out in your letter to reduce complaints and legal issues arising.

Keeper Guarantees

Here's another great little sales 'booster'. If you are offering bonuses with your product, you can tell your prospects that they can *'keep'* one or all of them regardless of whether the main product is returned or not.

To make this work, the 'keeper' must have a high-perceived value to your prospect. And to reduce your risk, the 'keeper' must also be low cost to produce. Information is one product that meets both these criteria.

Trial Subscriptions

This offer works great with continuity programs such as newsletter subscriptions or membership sites. Basically you offer the first issue free or first month free to your customers, as long as they agree to be billed every issue or month after until they 'cancel'.

You could even offer a free bonus to your customers when they receive their first paid issue or service the following month to encourage them not to cancel.

Some people will accept the free offer then cancel the subscription prior to the first billing date. Others will enjoy your product so much, or simply be too lazy to cancel, that they will stay subscribed. Either way, it is a great way of really multiplying your subscriptions.

Price Propositions

The following propositions are copy strategies more so than propositions. But they are relevant to your offer so I have included them in this section.

Hidden Price Strategy

This strategy is relevant if your product is more attractive or more newsworthy than your price, or if it's so expensive that it will put your prospects off from reading your letter.

If this is the case, simply bury your price in a paragraph towards the end of your letter. Keep it out of a sub headline and don't highlight it at all. This will ensure your benefits are communicated to your reader before the price is.

Featured Price Strategy

This strategy is opposite to the 'Hidden Price Strategy'. If your price is such that it will be more attractive than other elements of your offer, scream it out at the beginning of your letter before you go into your benefits. Even consider putting it in your main headline. *'Giant Wall Map, Only $1'* can be a powerhouse offer so use it as your main hook.

Just be careful how your prospect may perceive your low price. Low prices tend to communicate low quality. So consider combining this with a comparative or discount pricing strategy, or some reason why copy to explain why it's so cheap.

Comparative Pricing Strategy

If your product is the equivalent to another that sells for more, then use this in your copy. The more striking the comparison, the more prominent it should be in your letter.

Discount Offers

If your product is being sold at a discounted price, then consider expressing the price as a fraction. *'Half Price'* usually pulls better than *'Originally $10, now $5'*.

Savings Feature

This strategy can be used as an alternative to the 'Discount Pricing Strategy'. Instead of expressing your price saving as a fraction, express it as the actual amount saved. *'Save $11'* can be a stronger lead than *'Now only $19'* if the price is the feature.

Confession 20 -- Use A Deadline to Create Urgency

How many times have you delayed buying something until later, then never bought at all? It is something that we all do. But it is something you want to discourage in your own prospects. Wouldn't you agree?

Deadlines are an incredibly effective way of stopping your prospect from putting his order off and getting him to order immediately! They work on the principle of scarcity – and when used actually trigger a *psychological reactance* in your prospects to protect themselves from missing out on your offer.

We spoke about how persuasive offers can be in the previous chapter. Well you can _double_ or _even triple_ the persuasiveness of your offer by limiting some part of it with a deadline. Just be careful how you offer them.

If you use a deadline without any credible justification, you will threaten the whole credibility of your sales message and actually decrease your sales. So only use a deadline when you can justify it (see the next chapter for more on this subject).

The Java Script Deadline

One of the most popular deadlines is the deadline java script (below). Simply copy it and paste it on to the HTML code of your page (just remember to first paste it into an HTML editor such as Notepad so the formatting doesn't change the script).

Copy below this line

```
Order Before
<SCRIPT LANGUAGE="Javascript">
<!--
// Specify names of days:
var dayNames = new
Array("Sunday","Monday","Tuesday","Wednesday","Thursday","Friday","Saturday");
```

```
// Specify names of months:
var monthNames = new
Array("January","February","March","April","May","June","July","August","Septe
mber","October","November","December");
var now = new Date();
var thisday = dayNames[now.getDay() +2];
var thismonth = monthNames[now.getMonth()];
var thisdate = now.getDate();
var thisdate=thisdate + 2;
var thisyear = now.getFullYear();
document.write(thisday + ", " + thismonth + " " + thisdate + ", " + thisyear);
// -->
</SCRIPT>
and Get 2 Bonuses FREE!
```

Copy above this line

This should create the following on your page:

> Order Before January 2 and Get 2 Bonuses FREE!

The deadline will automatically change so that it remains two days ahead of the present date. If you want to increase/decrease the number of days, change the red number 2 in the above script.

The problem with the java script deadline is that if your prospect leaves without purchasing your product, then comes back to find the date changed, he immediately becomes suspicious. This can result in 1) a loss of credibility in your message, and 2) a loss of urgency to act now in your prospect.

Here are some alternative deadline solutions you could use in its place.

Limited Stock Deadline

> We only have 50 copies of this bonus available so I can only give this deal to the first 50 people who respond.

Reward Deadline

> I am giving this bonus to the first 50 people who take action as a

> reward for fast response.

<u>Celebration</u>

> To celebrate, I am giving this bonus to the first 50 people who respond.

Look around in your swipe file and you will find a whole heap of other *credible* reasons for using a deadline.

Confession 21 -- Use 'Reason Why' Copy To Reduce Suspicion

Y our prospect might be moved by your copy but he may still be perplexed by elements of your message if they are not explained to him. He'll have such questions as:

1. "Why is there a deadline on this deal?... Is there a legitimate reason or are you just trying to get me to buy now!", or

2. "Why is your product better than theirs... surely it's not just because you say so!", or,

3. "Why are you being so good to me… it can't be just because I'm a nice guy!"

You have to explain <u>WHY</u> certain elements in your message and offer are the way they are. Without an explanation, your prospect becomes suspicious. Don't you when a salesman is nice to you? And when your prospect becomes suspicious, the credibility of your whole message is threatened.

'Reason Why Copy' is very powerful, particularly when used with an offer. It answers all of the burning questions your prospect might have and adds credibility to your message.

Here are some examples of "Reason Why Copy" in action:

Explaining An Offer

> I got a great deal on these products and I'm willing to pass the savings on to you just so I can win your business.

Explaining A Discount

> I went to our warehouse the other day and the guys quickly pointed out a pile of products that have been slightly damaged in

storage. These products are in good working order and still come with our 100% no questions asked 90 day money back guarantee. It's just that they're paint is slightly scratched. So now I'm looking to clear this stock by giving you this great offer.

Explaining A Unique Selling Proposition

We use a special space age polymer in Product A to ensure that it will never rust.

Confession 22 -- Use A Powerful Guarantee To Reduce The Purchasing Risk

Denny Hatch, publisher of 'Who's Mailing What?' uses a telling analogy when he compares direct marketing to other purchasing methods available to the public.

> *Suppose you went down to your corner news stand and asked to take home a magazine to read, with the idea that you wouldn't pay for it unless you liked it. And even then you wouldn't pay full price, you'd only pay half.*
>
> *Would any news stand or retailer allow you that liberty? Would they be in business long if they did? But that's how virtually every magazine subscription, book club, record club, CD club and video club actually operates.*

Most people are reluctant to buy anything they cannot hold in their hands at that particular moment. So for them, they see direct marketing to have a number of risks associated with it that regular marketing does not.

These risks fall into six main categories that you must address in your sales letter (see next page).

Risk	Questions that must be answered
1. Functional	Will it work? Will it last?
2. Physical	Is it safe?
3. Financial	Is it worth it? Am I getting a good deal?
4. Social	Will other people approve? Is it appropriate to my peer group?
5. Psychological	Do I deserve it? Will it make me feel good? Will it impress others?
6. Time	Will I get it in time?

So how do you reduce these 6 purchasing risks? Well the most effective way is to offer a powerful no questions asked guarantee. Consumer laws in most countries require you to offer a money back guarantee anyway, so you might as well get the greatest benefit out of it.

And as an added bonus, guarantees also add _credibility_ to your claims and help _justify the purchase_ logically to your prospect.

Guarantees are powerful. If used correctly they will be one of the most persuasive elements in your letter. So don't just glance over it like most letters do. Create a good guarantee and communicate it over and over in your letter.

3 Types Of Guarantees

There are 3 main types of guarantees.

The Satisfaction Guarantee

A satisfaction guarantee guarantees your prospect will be satisfied with his purchase. For example:

> If for any reason you're not fully satisfied, I'll refund your money in full. No questions asked. I know after your purchase today, you'll immediately see how valuable this is.

The Perception Guarantee

A perception guarantee guarantees your prospect will feel different when he uses your product. This is basically a satisfaction guarantee reworded to sound like a results guarantee which is much more persuasive. Here's an example of a perception guarantee:

> If your friends don't accuse you of having a face lift, send back the empty bottle for a full refund.

The Results Guarantee

A results guarantee guarantees your prospect will achieve a result when he uses your product. Here's an example of a results guarantee.

> If you use any three of my strategies, I personally guarantee that you'll <u>double your online profits within a year</u>. Otherwise (1) these secrets and the $798 in bonuses are yours to keep and (2) I'll compensate you with a $200 cashier's check, in addition to a 100% refund of your purchase price.

The results guarantee is the <u>*most*</u> persuasive of all guarantees because they take away a huge chunk of the purchasing risk from your prospect's mind. It should be used ahead of the others whenever possible.

The satisfaction guarantee is the most basic and <u>*least*</u> persuasive of all the guarantees. They don't really guarantee your product will work at all and consequently, a certain degree of purchasing risk still exists in your prospect's mind.

You should always use a perception guarantee over a satisfaction guarantee (except when you can use a results guarantee instead). Perception guarantees are simply satisfaction guarantees reworded to sound like results guarantees. They are not as effective as a results guarantee, but still much more persuasive than a satisfaction guarantee.

Single Guarantees vs. Multiple Guarantees

A multiple guarantee is a combination of two or more guarantees. The most common combination is a satisfaction guarantee combined with a results guarantee.

If you are able to, use a double guarantee as they almost always outsell single guarantees. Here's an excellent example of a double guarantee from Dan Kennedy's 'Copywriting Seminar In A Box' sales page.

> ## I Will Back Up This Advanced Copywriting Seminar-In-A-Box With TWO Very Generous Guarantees To Protect You Against Any Possibility Of Wasting Your Money Or Your Time
>
> **First guarantee:** I'll give you a 60-DAY FREE PEEK. You can listen, learn, and use this Seminar-In-A-Box for up to TWO FULL MONTHS without obligation. Anytime within those two months that you choose to return the package, you'll get a FULL refund. If you will write me a letter explaining why you are unhappy, I'll even pay you an extra $25.00 for your trouble!
>
> Immerse Yourself In These Seminar Tapes And.....
> You will be MUCH more skilled and better equipped to turn out copy that will achieve the absolute maximum possible results in any situation. Being able to turn words put on paper into floods of precisely the prospects or clients you want, or into cash business literally at will, is THE skill that can quite literally change you and your life.
>
> Which brings me to my **second guarantee**: anytime within SIX MONTHS, if you can send proof you used one or more of the strategies and secrets presented in this Seminar package and can honestly say you didn't profit by many times the price of the entire package, I'll still refund every penny you paid PLUS $50.00 for your trouble! (I dare any direct marketing pro offering seminars to match this guarantee.)
>
> So the Copywriting Seminar-In-The-Box comes to you with ZERO risk. I wouldn't have it any other way.

Some More Advice On Creating Powerful Guarantees

When you create your guarantee, try to make them as persuasive as possible. Here are some pointers to help you:

- Make the guarantee as long as possible. Long guarantees sell more than short ones.

- Wherever possible, use multiple guarantees over single guarantees. Multiple guarantees sell more.

- Discuss the guarantee at great length in your copy. The more discussion, the less perceived risk to your prospect.

- Sum up your guarantee in 1-2 paragraphs and put it in a Johnson box. This will ensure it gets read. (see Confession # 41 for more on Johnson Boxes).

- Consider putting your guarantee in the headline. For example –

"Discover How John Smith Lost 10 lbs in 10 Weeks, And How You Can Do The Same… 100 % Guaranteed!"

- Go to your swipe file, and select a guarantee that best matches the one you're offering. I would strongly consider adapting the entire guarantee text into your letter. There is an art to writing powerful guarantees, so you're probably best served using someone else's proven example. It will probably be ten times more powerful than one you could write yourself, and take ten times less time to create!

- Set up a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for accepting refunds to make it as hassle free as possible for your customer. They'll remain happy and you'll probably keep them as a customer next time.

Confession 23 -- Close The Sale So Your Prospects Take Action Today

One of the biggest mistakes made by direct response copywriters is that they do not ask for the sale. They are afraid of rejection and are prepared to have a large list of 'maybes' rather than a small list of 'yes's'.

Yet if they asked for the sale, their profits would increase dramatically! And isn't this the biggest reason for being in business?

If you are truly serious about your letter the most profitable it can possibly be, then close the sale by asking for the sale. Here's how.

Repeat The Pain

Before you close the sale, remind your readers what will happen if they don't act. Remind them of their problems and make them feel the pain and suffering of not solving it. Make their current situation seem inadequate (without putting them down of course) so they'll be more likely to take action to change it. And don't forget to mention what element they'll miss out on in your offer (scarcity).

Show The Gain

Once you've got your prospects feeling how bad their situation is, show them how good it could be if they had your product. Get your prospects to visualize themselves using your product and experiencing some kind of desirable benefit from it. Show them how much better their life will be when owning your product.

Ask For The Order

Once you've increased the gap between your prospect's current situation (show the pain) and their desired state (show the gain), ask them to take action now. Also repeat the scarcity of your offer to further encourage them.

Then tell them exactly what they have to do to order. Make it clear so there is no confusion.

Confession 24 -- Make Your P.S. Sell

R ead about Professor Voegele's studies on sales letter readership in Confession # 41 and you will see that people will generally start at the top of letter, then go immediately to the end to see who the letter is from.

The P.S. is then _read 90% of the time_ before the reader returns to the top, or to other fixing points which have intrigued him during the glancing process.

After the headline, the P.S. is usually the second most read part of your sales letter. It's like a second headline and/or second opening paragraph, so use it strategically to communicate something persuasive.

You can use the P.S to:

- Bring up the big promise again
- Add more benefits
- Powerfully state the offer
- Create curiosity
- Build urgency; and/or
- Add even more credibility and proof.

Here is a sample formula of how the P.S. can be used to better communicate your message in your sales letter (please note that this is just a sample, not the rule).

1. P.S. – Use the first P.S. to repeat the headline.
2. P.P.S. – The second P.S. is the P.S. most often read. Use the second P.S. to repeat the offer and deadline again.
3. P.P.P.S. – Use the third P.S. to repeat the bonuses your prospect gets when he purchases before the deadline.

Here's a great P.S. example from Corey Rudl's 'Insider Secrets' page (http://www.marketingtips.com/t.cgi/648471):

P.S. At this point after reading a typical offer, you probably think to yourself *"Do I really want to gamble ~~$397~~ (Special: 3 easy payments of $65.67)?"* Friend, that's exactly why I've offered my "Nothing To Lose" guarantee" for years. If my course doesn't deliver, I'm the one who eats his shirt -- not you.

The $798 worth of bonuses are yours to keep no matter what, and I'll even compensate you with a $200 cashier's check. **That's a guaranteed gain, no matter what you decide.** Click here to order online now.

P.P.S. Don't forget that my course is **tax deductible** as a business expense. Depending on your tax bracket, its actual cost could be as little as $147 after your bookkeeper deducts it on your tax return... so be sure to remind him, because he'll probably be too busy counting all the cash that comes pouring in once you're using the strategies I teach you in this course.

P.P.S. Still not convinced that you need this "cutting edge" home-study course? Let me give you one more reason why this course is absolutely essential for anyone seriously doing business on the Internet. If you are not using *The Insider Secrets to Marketing Your Business on the Internet* course, **you're losing money.** You can't lose with this deal. If you use any three of my strategies and techniques, and you don't double your profits in 12 months, I will cheerfully refund your money and give you another $200 to boot! Remember, this offer is only valid until **JavaScript deadline**. Click here to order online now.

Confession 25 -- Create A Secondary Response Mechanism To Follow Up With Your Prospects

A recent study by Sales and Marketing Executives International concluded that 81% of major sales are closed after the fifth contact. In direct marketing, there is a general rule of thumb, contact your prospect at least 7 times before giving up on them.

Unfortunately this is easier said than done on-line. In the direct mail world you already have your prospects address. Contacting your prospect is easy! You just send him 7 specially worded sales letters in a pre-determined sequence over a pre-determined time.

But how do you achieve the same result on the Internet when you don't know who your prospects are? The answer is by using a secondary response device.

Secondary response devices work like this.

Your prospects go to your web page where they find your sales letter. This is your primary response. In other words, the primary response being sought is a sale.

When your prospects decide to leave your site without making a purchase, a pop up window (or something similar) appears asking for their email address. This is your secondary response. In other words, the secondary response being sought is for your prospects to give you their contact details so you can follow up with them.

When the secondary response is obtained, you can then follow up with your prospects using an autoresponder, ezine, telephone or direct mail piece. The purpose of the follow up is to build trust, lower the perceived purchasing risk, remind about your product and <u>ultimately</u> sell more of your products. And don't forget Dan Thies's comments about using them to gain feedback as a catalyst for improvement of your product and/or sales letter (see Confession # 5).

Secondary response devices and follow ups can see a significant increase in your on-line sales. While not overly complicated, there is a knack for setting up them up effectively. To make your job easier, I have simplified this process into the following 5 step method.

Step 1 – Design Your Lead Generating Offer

The first step is to design your lead generating offer. This is what you are going to give your prospects when they give you their email addresses and/or personal contact details. The following are popular offers which can be used separately or as a combination to successfully generate leads:

Free Ebooks/E-reports

You can offer a small ebook or e-report about the generic subject of your product to plant a seed in your prospect's mind. For example, North American Coin & Currency offers the 'Gold Guide' which sells the generic advantages of precious metal investments. It also provides information about their services, benefits and unique selling proposition.

Free Autoresponder Courses

Ken Evoy's 'Masters Courses' are probably the most well known examples of this online. You basically sign up to one of Ken's courses and get a 'free' autoresponder series of emails that are sent to you over the course of a week or so. The emails educate you about the particular subject which you requested, as well as expose you to Ken's products.

Free Planning Kits

Another way to build on a preceding offer is to make up a complex 'kit' of everything your prospect needs to plan a solution to their problem.

For example, Marriot Hotels developed a series of free meeting and convention planning kits for particular cities where Marriot had hotels. The kits also gave details about the particular services, benefits and unique selling proposition offered by Marriot Hotels. This resulted in a large number of highly qualified, predisposed leads to follow up with.

Free Inspections

Free inspections and/or surveys make another great freebie offer. Free offers such as a *'let us check your roof for leaks'* and *'free safety inspection of your car tires'* offer genuine services which should appeal only to people who have a need for them. Hence, the leads should be highly qualified for your backend product.

Free Samples

Offering free samples of your product for your prospects to try is another way to generate qualified leads. Samples give your prospects a chance to test your product to see how good (or how bad) it is. This offer works particularly well with ebook sites.

Free Gifts

Free gifts are another great freebie offer, as long as the gift only generates 'qualified' leads. If you use the wrong gift, you could have a huge list of unqualified people not interested in your backend product.

Perhaps the best example I've seen of this offer is from Dan Kennedy. Dan offers a free audio tape of himself speaking about direct mail at some high priced seminar.

In the tape, Dan introduces the listeners to the power of direct mail, and then gives a number of really inspiring examples of it in action. When prospects sign up to receive the tape, Dan gets their mailing address (not just email) which he uses to send the tape along with a sales letter to Dan's 'Magnetic Marketing' product.

Free Discount/Gift Certificates

Free discount and/or gift certificates are another effective lead generating offer that works particularly well for hotels and service providers. You of course make your profits from the backend and/or lifetime value of your customers.

Contests

Contests are a sure way to generate leads, just so long as they don't interfere with your primary response. They have been known to increase response rates by up to 50%. The larger the prize, the higher the response. You can offer anything as a prize. Cash is a popular choice. So are free ebook packages (my favorite because they don't cost you anything).

Step 2 – Add Your Secondary Response To Your Web Page

After you've designed your secondary response offer, you have to somehow add it to your web page without distracting from your primary response.

There are a number of ways in which you can do this, the most common being a pop up. Here are the options available to you

Pop Ups

Pop ups are a fantastic marketing tool and I have found them to increase my secondary responses by up to 300%. All you have to do is cut and paste some java script into your primary sales pages' HTML.

You can get a script to suit your needs from the pop up window generator that comes with the Ultimate Marketer's Resource (http://www.goldbar.net). Alternatively, you could search for some free scripts using the search terms 'pop up generator' at your search engine. There's plenty out there.

If you use a pop up, make it an exit pop up so it doesn't distract your visitors from your headline, readership and primary response when they first arrive. The exit pop up will only launch when your visitor leaves your site.

When you design your pop up, follow these guidelines:

- Use a headline to attract attention and inspire your prospect to read on.
- Use a small amount of sales copy to outline your offer.
- Consider the use of a testimonial or something similar to add credibility to your offer (optional).

- Use a <u>call to action</u> to ask for your prospect's details.
- Use a <u>web form</u> which your prospects can enter their details into.

Here's an example of these guidelines in action from the 'Great Headlines Instantly' sales page.

Stealth Mailer

Stealth mailers are basically a pop up with a twist. When your visitors arrive at your site, a Stealth Mailer window pops ups asking your visitors to click on an 'OK' button to subscribe to your list.

If your visitors click 'OK', the Stealth Mailer uses their default email client (e.g. Eudora, Outlook Express, Outlook Exchange, Netscape messenger) to send you an email from their default email address.

The email address from which the email is sent is then registered in your list so you can send it follow ups.

Stealth mailers work well when combined with an exit pop up. You can use it to pop up when your visitor first arrives at your site, and because it doesn't require any complicated action, won't really distract from your letter. Then, if your visitor decides to leave without ordering, he is hit again with an exit pop up making your secondary response offer once more.

This combination can substantially increase your secondary response rate (although it may annoy your customers) and it's one I recommend at least testing.

Here's an example of a Stealth Mailer window from Ravi Jayagopal's Stealth Mailer site (http://webmasterinabox.net/stealthmailer.html).
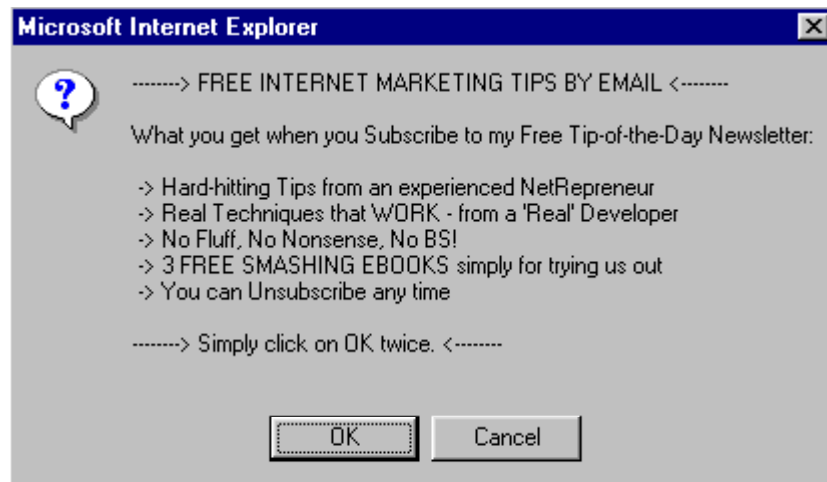
Sliding Pop Ups

The senseless abuse of pop ups by many, has increased viewer resistance and decreased their effectiveness.

Today (in 2003) an estimated 50 million web surfers in the US alone use Free Popup Blocking Software to kill pop ups, leaving around 60% of pop up messages undelivered.

That's why I'd recommend forgoing a pop up (although the stealth mailer is worth a go) and using a 'Slide In Pop Up' instead. Slide In Pop Ups simply display your pop up window as part of your primary web page, _not_ in a separate browser like normal pop ups do.

They *cannot be blocked* which is why I recommend them.

Here is an example of a Slide In Pop Up from Ravi Jayagopal's Slide In Pop Up site (http://www.slideinpopup.com). There are a number of different types of slide ins there which you can use.

Including The Secondary Response In Your Sales letter

You can also include your secondary response device in the copy of your sales letter.

Here is an example of how Corey Rudl's included a secondary response in his 'Insider Secrets' site (http://www.marketingtips.com/t.cgi/648471).

> Trust me; use the bullet-proof strategies I'm about to share -- you've got nothing to lose -- and you'll have the power to drive over your competition at record speeds. You'll get the maximum return from every dollar, and every minute, you invest in your online business.

On that note, join my FREE newsletter to learn lots of tips and tricks for online marketing.

<mark>Subscribe to the monthly Internet Marketing Tips Newsletter with hundreds of promotional tips and tricks -- FREE ONLINE -- A $147 VALUE!</mark> This is a private mailing list and it will never be sold or given away for any reason. You can also un-subscribe if you ever want.

Tell your friends about us -- but not your competition.

Your First Name: [   ]

Your Last Name: [   ]

Your E-mail Address: [   ]

(Example: bob1642@aol.com is CORRECT,
where bob1642@aol or bob1642 are INCORRECT)

[   ]

Click the button above to be subscribed to Internet Marketing Tips FREE Newsletter! Forms capable browser required... Please just press the button ONCE!

Step 3 – Design Your Follow Up Process

Once you have set up your lead generating secondary response device, it is time to design your follow up process. There are several options available to you, and the right option largely depends on the type of business you are in.

Autoresponder Follow Up

Ken Evoy used this analogy in his 'Make Your Words Sell' ebook when he described why an autoresponder follow up isn't always the best way to go:

For every 100 buyers [of Ken's expensive PennyGold software]…

- *Only 15 buy on the same day as the first visit to the site*
- *40 buy within 1-2 days*
- *15 buy within 3-4 days*
- *30 buy more than 4 days after the first visit, many as long as months later.*

In other words, 85% bought after their initial visit. Many of that 85% bought after triggering one or more of PennyGold's Backup Responses.

Now let's compare this to our sitesell.com site, where 80% buy within 24 hours.

Why the difference. Because the (sitesell) product is far less expensive, the site is a stronger selling site and our affiliates do a good job of pre-selling…

In other words, autoresponders that send direct response email follow ups (e.g. more testimonials, FAQ's, final chance offers and so on) are only appropriate to some products, not all.

Low to medium cost products being sold primarily online will probably benefit from them because of their small purchasing risk and high turnover rate, and because they require no personal selling.

New products may also benefit from them because of the product adoption process (outlined below) of unknown products.
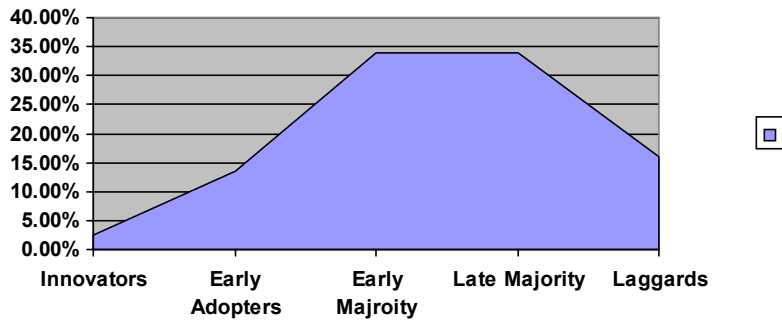
Ezine Follow Up

Instead of sending out a sequence of direct response emails via autoresponder, you could send out an ezine instead. An ezine is an email delivered newsletter which provides valuable content to your recipients.

They can be used to build product awareness and trust. For example, business consultants could send out a free ezine to their list to build their perceived level of 'expertise'. This could also be done by personal trainers, coaches and other consultants looking to condition their leads.

You could even publish your ezine using an autoresponder to create what Terry Dean likes to call an 'Ezine-In-A-Box'. This is basically 12 months worth of ezine issues automatically sent out each week via sequential autoresponder after people subscribe. That way you'll get all the advantages of an ezine without the work.

Back End Offer Follow Ups

Sometimes an autoresponder and/or ezine follow up isn't the best option at all. This typically applies to businesses selling non-hobby related products and/or services.

Let's take a look at hairdressers for example. How many customers do you think would be interested in a newsletter about hair? Not many I'd say.

In fact, you will probably find that most people would unsubscribe to a list if they got an email about hair… it's just worthless information as far as they are concerned.

A better strategy in this case could be to just send out special offers. For example, say a hairdresser sent out something like this during a slow period:

```
Dear [insert customer name here]:

I just wanted to let you know that due to a slow
down in business, we're offering a special 20%
discount on haircuts to all our valued customers
for the week of September 3rd.

Unfortunately, we do expect to get booked out
pretty quickly, so you must book your appointment
within the next 72 hours to get this discount.

Just call us at XXX-XXXX right after you read this
and we'll book an appointment right away. We look
forward to seeing you again soon!

Sincerely,

[your name here]
```

As long as this isn't abused, you would probably find that most recipients would be *very* receptive to an email offer like this. And even better, sales for that period would increase substantially (depending on the size of the email list of course).

This strategy could be used to great effect by holiday resorts, hotels, beauty therapists, boat hires, and other businesses in the service industry during quiet times.

Direct Mail/Telemarketing Follow Up

Of course, email isn't the only follow up option available. You could also use a secondary response device to obtain telephone numbers and home addresses as well.

This strategy is often used by websites selling expensive products. For example, websites selling cars often have a form which interested prospects must enter their details into to arrange a test drive. A salesman will then follow up by phone to make an appointment, and then try to close the sale after the test drive.

And how is this for impeccable timing. This morning I received a phone call from a local photographer, offering me a huge discount on family photos for this week only. And the photographer only contacted me because I entered my details into a secondary response device at his website a few months earlier.

Step 5 – Test Everything Is Working

Before you generate any traffic to your sales letter site, test your secondary response devices to make sure they work.

- Make sure the pop ups actually pop up and display correctly.

- Test to see if the Stealth Mailer sends an email from your default email client.

- Enter your details into the mailer form to see if it registers.

- Do a test mailing to ensure that it works.

Once everything is up and running, split test to see which works best on your site. Then sit back and watch the money roll-in.

More Resources

If you are looking for an autoresponder service, I would recommend using the Ultimate Marketers Resource (http://www.goldbar.net) as your third party service provider. You get an *unlimited* number of autoresponders and email list accounts (along with all the other tools) all for one low monthly fee.

There are other similar services out there too, but to tell you the truth I haven't used them so I can't recommend them. Just don't go paying $9.95 a month for one piddly autoresponder without checking out the Ultimate Marketers Resource first.

If you want to learn more about email copywriting, then I would recommend you check out these two resources.

'Autoresponder Magic' – This ebook is more than 500 pages long and is basically just one huge swipe file of autoresponder messages. I've read better, but nevertheless it is quite handy to have… plus it comes with Free Reprint Rights, so *I can give it to you for FREE*. Just go to http://www.digital-copywriting.com/freebonus.html to claim it.

'Make Your Words Sell' - This is something I highly recommended you invest in. You'll get an excellent 70 plus page ebook on email copywriting that explains everything there is to know about email and autoresponders.

It also comes with a 61 page ebook on copywriting for on-line stores, a 27 page ebook on automatic response words, and 309 page ebook on how to write a web page sales letter. And all this for under US $30. Check it out at http://myws.sitesell.com.

SECTION 3 – WEBSITE

CREDIBILITY

John Fraser-Robinson, author of 'The Essential Secrets Of Effective Direct Mail' tells this analogy when he discusses the importance of credibility.

> *"It all started with a mailing… the product was a personal computer and a few bits of software. I liked the offer so I sent off the reply card. The rep phoned back soon after and made an appointment.*
>
> *He explained the process; he would personally demonstrate the equipment. He would then leave it with me for a few days. He'd then ring to check (if he hadn't heard from me before) whether I wanted to keep it. The paperwork could all be done by mail.*
>
> *The offer hung right.*
>
> *It was a proposition made simple, quickly and with confidence. It was easy and convenient. The price was fair. It meant I could play with and feel the product hands on. He sounded like a nice guy. So I accepted.*
>
> *Then… you wouldn't believe the mess that turned up. From the stains on his tie, to the off white shirt and the frayed cuffs. His suit was shinier than his car.*
>
> *So he's de-boxing, I'm debunking. While he's setting up, I'm climbing down. His appearance had destroyed the magic words. It hung right. Now it was no longer hanging – it lay shattered on the floor…*

> *I wanted to buy what this man had to sell. Yet evidence had undone it all. Stupid silly little things. The stained tie, the frayed cuffs, the tired shiny suit and the rest.*

The computer company had done all the right things as far as lead generation is concerned. Yet, all the good work was undone when the unprofessionally dressed salesman appeared to close the sale.

The moral of the story… dress like a professional to gain credibility! And this applies online as well. Except the salesman isn't a human being. It's your website.

Think about it. How many scams are there online? A heap right! So how important do you think gaining *'trust'* is to getting a sale? It's absolutely critical!

Do I have any hard proof to back this statement up? Well, is extensive research by Stanford University (www.webcredibility.org) good enough for you?

Stanford University has pioneered extensive research into website credibility, and their findings are interesting to say the least. Here's how the researchers summed the findings up:

> *"… Once a site is above a user's personal threshold to qualifying as having a professional look, then other aspects of the web site come into equation. In other words, the visual design may be the first test of a site's credibility. If it fails on this criterion, web users are likely to <u>abandon</u> the site and seek other sources."*

These findings have changed the way direct marketers build credibility online. Instead of concentrating purely on the traditional credibility methods (e.g. testimonials, quoting research and so on), direct marketers are now beginning to include their site's design elements in their focus.

This section is unique to most website copywriting manuals in that it discusses the design elements (invisibles) which need to be incorporated on your site to pass your visitor's initial *'trustworthiness and credibility'* test. We'll go onto message credibility in the next section.

Confession 26 -- Design Your Site To Convey A "Real World" Feel

A ccording to the Stanford University Studies, a site's real world feel is the biggest credibility factor people consider when they visit a site. Visitors look at the elements that highlight the bricks-and-mortar nature of the organization it represents.

To gain maximum credibility, you should highlight features that communicate the legitimacy and accessibility of your business. Here are some easy to follow pointers for your site (Note: I've included examples from Corey Rudl's site because it's the best example of real world feel I've seen online).

Customer Service

Provide a quick response to your customer service questions. Stanford University found this to be the number one element in building a site's real world feel. It shows you're both professional and reliable.

Staff Photographs

Provide a photograph of yourself to show that there is a real person behind your web business. This goes a long way to increasing the real world feel of your site, and as an added bonus, builds your message credibility as well.

You can also provide photographs of your staff and/or office building on your 'Contact Us' page to further demonstrate the real people behind your business without affecting the download time and readership pattern of your sales letter page.

Corey's uses his photo (on the left side of the headline) to show that there is <u>a real person</u> behind his site.
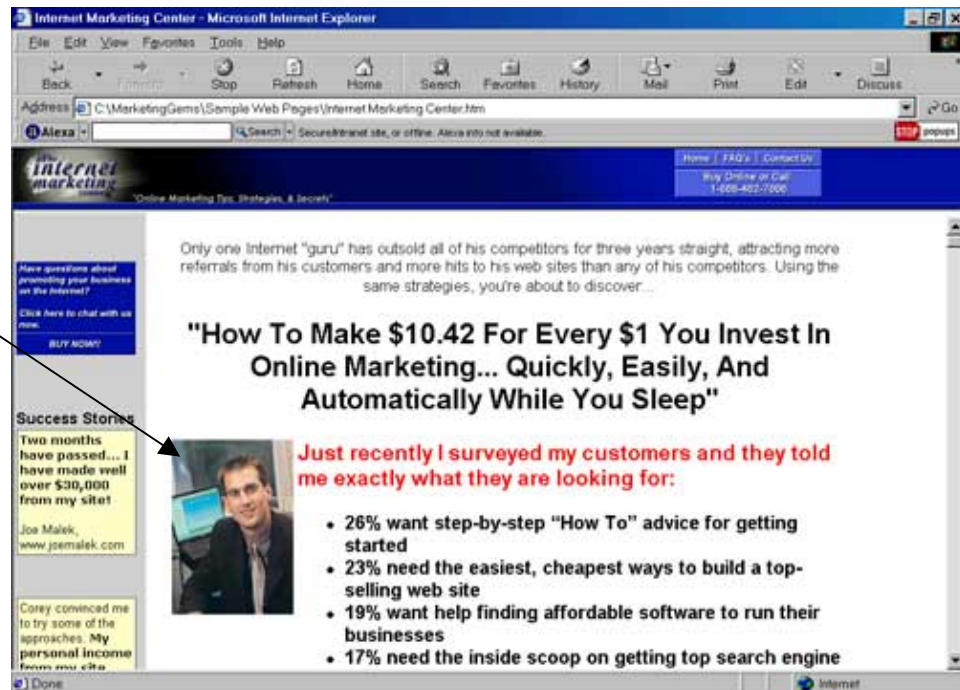

Contact Information

Provide a telephone number, street address and contact email address at the bottom of each page to further demonstrate the legitimacy of your business.

If possible, use a street address as opposed to a post office box. Post office boxes only serve to make people suspicious of your set up. Whereas street addresses create a real bricks and mortar feel to your business which comes across as much more trustworthy.

If you can only be contacted via post office box (as is the case with some home based businesses), use reason why copy on your 'Contact Us' page to explain why. This helps eliminate the suspicion that post office boxes are generally associated with.

Corey's displays his contact details and street address at the bottom of each page to show the real <u>bricks and mortar</u> behind his business.
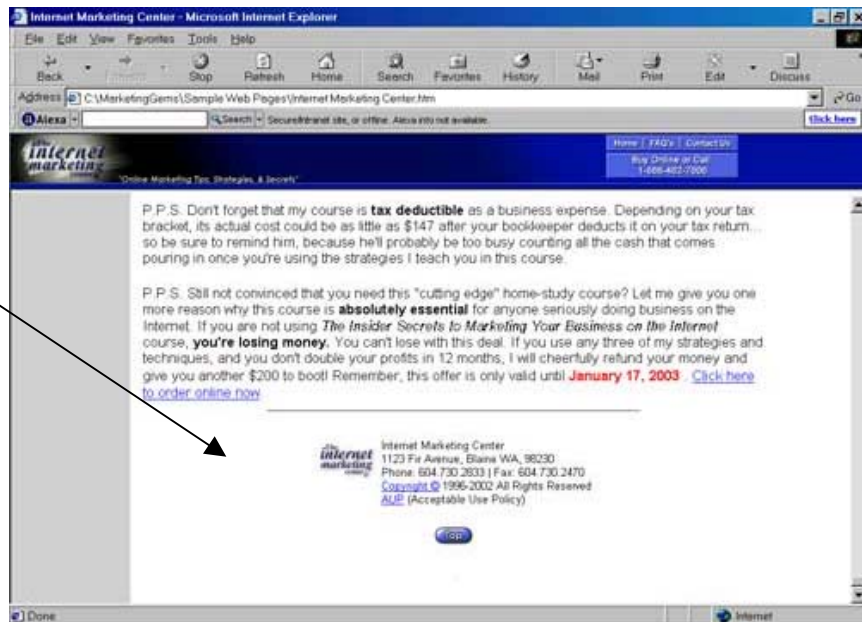
Signature

Provide your signature at the bottom of your letter. It really gives it that personal touch, once again demonstrating that there is a real person behind your site.

Corey provides his signature to once again show that there is a<u> real person</u> behind his site and also <u>personalize</u> his message.

Confession 27 -- Maximize The Usability Of Your Website

According to the Stanford University Studies, a site's usability is the second biggest credibility factor people consider when they visit a site. My only comment is that this may be more applicable to larger content sites which have hundreds of pages to navigate through rather than direct response web sites which tend to have only a few pages.
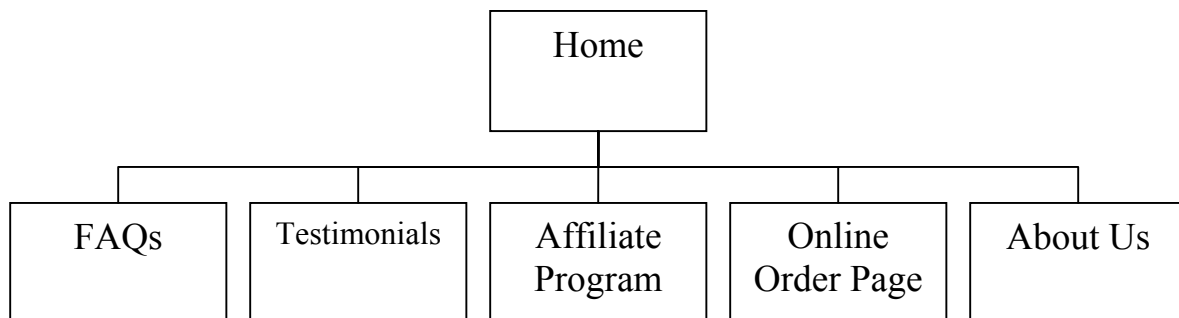
Anyway, you can increase your website's usability by doing the following:

Navigation Structure

You should create a navigation structure that is logical and which people can navigate easily. This allows visitors to find what they want with a minimum of hassle.
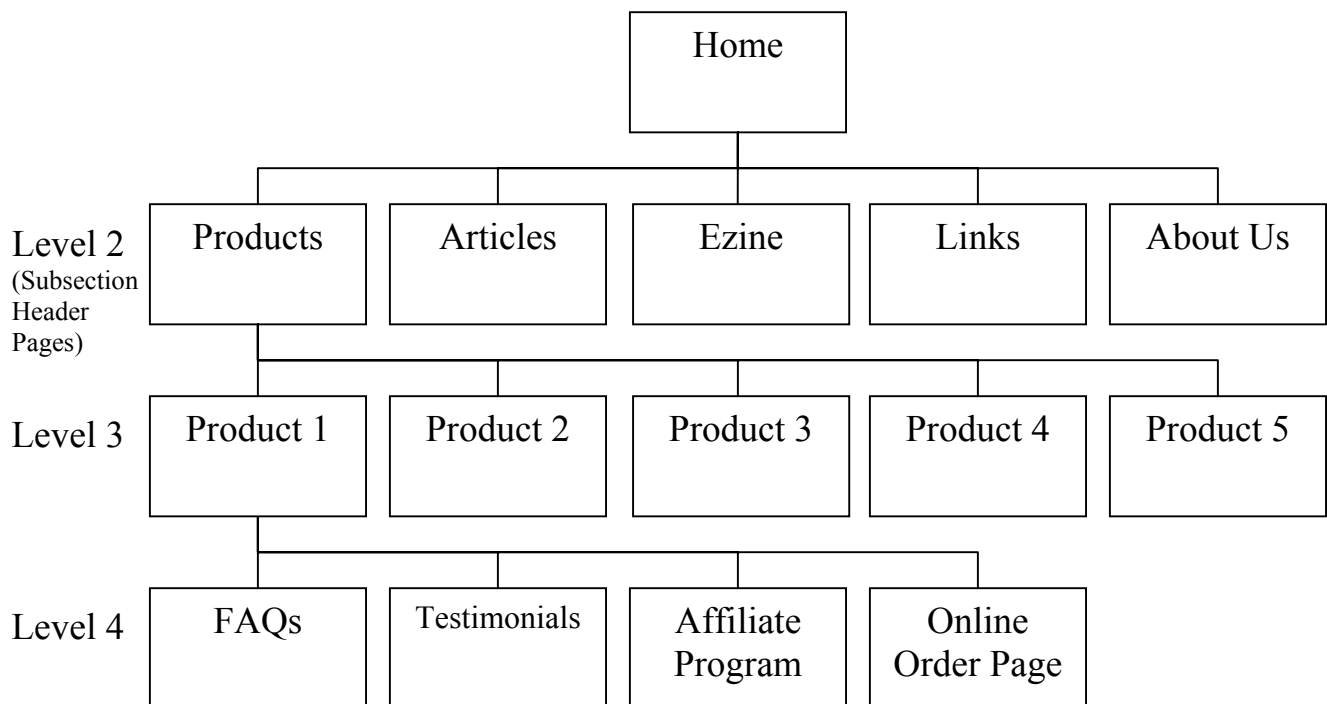
Mini-Sites

For mini-sites (sites that only have a few pages relating to a single product) the navigation structure is easy. The main sales page would be the home page, and all other pages would be the top-level directory pages.

```
                        ┌──────────────┐
                        │     Home     │
                        └──────────────┘
        ┌──────────┬──────────┼──────────┬──────────┐
  ┌──────────┐┌──────────┐┌──────────┐┌──────────┐┌──────────┐
  │   FAQs   ││Testimonials││ Affiliate ││  Online  ││ About Us │
  │          ││          ││  Program  ││Order Page││          │
  └──────────┘└──────────┘└──────────┘└──────────┘└──────────┘
```

Websites

For larger websites that contain multiple products and maybe pages for other subjects, the navigation structure would be different. Here you would group all related pages together and use a subsection header page for each group.
Then when you get to the main sales pages for each product, the structure would be the same as a mini-site's, just on a lower level.

```
                              ┌──────────┐
                              │   Home   │
                              └────┬─────┘
          ┌──────────┬────────────┼────────────┬──────────┐
Level 2   │Products  │ Articles   │  Ezine     │  Links   │ About Us │
(Subsection
Header
Pages)
          ┌──────────┬────────────┬────────────┬──────────┐
Level 3   │Product 1 │ Product 2  │ Product 3  │Product 4 │Product 5 │

          ┌──────────┬────────────┬────────────┐
Level 4   │  FAQs    │Testimonials│ Affiliate  │  Online  │
          │          │            │  Program   │Order Page│
```

Navigation Bar

The navigation bar is generally a list of links to both the second level pages on your site and your home page. The links can be either graphical or text. An effective style is to put a graphical version of your navigation bar at the top of each page, along with a text version at the bottom (in case the graphics don't load).

Home Page

Mini-Sites

For mini-sites, the main sales page will be the home page.

Websites

For larger websites, the home page should serve as a table of contents for the entire site. Think of it as a magazine cover for your site. There should be text links to all your top level directory pages (also known as the subsection header pages) along with a brief description of each.

If possible, there should also be links to your level 3 pages as well. The sales pages for each of your products should be shown in particular. You want your visitors to see exactly what you are selling from the outset so they don't miss it during their visit (of course this may not be possible for site's that sell a large number of products such as an online store).

On the next page, you'll find an excellent example of a website's home page from Corey Rudl's marketingtips.com website. Note the 'magazine cover' style of design.

Subsection Headers

Subsection header pages usually sit on the 2nd level of your site's navigation structure, and act as mini home pages for the lower level pages beneath it.

Mini-Sites

There is no need for subsection header pages to exist on a mini-site as there are only a small number of pages to navigate.

Websites

Subsection header pages are suited to larger sites that cover a wide range of subjects and contain deep content. For extremely large sites, there may be several of these pages at a number of different levels (not just on level 2).

Confession 28 -- Create A Visually Appealing Website That Supports A Professional Image

Another important credibility factor identified by the Stanford University studies is a site's professional appearance. The researchers actually noted this by stating:

> *"... the visual design may be the first test of a site's credibility. If it fails on this criterion, Web users are likely to abandon the site and seek other sources of information and services."*

You can increase your direct response web site's professional appearance by using a simple but professional looking banner at the top of your page. Use the techniques discussed in Confession # 45 to prevent the added download time from boring your visitors into leaving.

You should also follow all the tips outlined in this manual. If you do this (eg. Download time, real world feel etc) you will automatically appear more professional.

Corey uses a simple yet professionally designed banner to appear more professional to his visitors.

Confession 29 -- Make It Easy To Verify Information

You should always try to give your visitors the opportunity to verify information on your site. Even if people don't follow through with the verification, you've demonstrated confidence and made the citations, studies, news stories, and references quoted on your sales page even more credible.

If you are selling a course on search engine marketing, provide a link to a page that have your traffic statistics recorded. If you are selling a money making opportunity, provide scanned pictures of checks you have received. I'm sure you get the picture!

Confession 30 -- Avoid Amateurism

The Stanford University study found amateur elements of a web site hurt web credibility the most. You should therefore take extra care to avoid small glitches on your site.

You can avoid amateurism by following all the tips outlined in this manual, as well as doing the following:

Domain Name

Use a domain name that matches the message you are communicating. Avoid using domain names such as www.freewebhosting.com/yourfreepage.html that scream amateur. Domain names and web hosting services are easily affordable so there's no excuse not to use them.

Spelling Errors

Avoid spelling errors. Spelling errors really hurt your web credibility, so run a spell check through your page before you post it to the Internet.

Broken Links

Avoid broken links. This is another element that really hurts your credibility. Sales letter sites tend to have only a few links on them so it shouldn't be a big factor for you.

And for larger sites though, this task is easily accomplished with a number of free software tools such as Xenu's Link Sleuth at http://home.snafu.de/tilman/XENU.ZIP. Xenu's Link Sleuth is a freeware program that will identify broken links on your site for you. Use it once a month to keep your site in shape.

SECTION 4 – MESSAGE CREDIBILITY

Your prospects must believe that they will benefit from the purchase of your product, and they will want more than just your word as proof. Otherwise they simply won't buy your product.

The theory is that you need to prove the following 3 factors to your prospect before he'll make a purchase:

1. That you are _TRUSTWORTHY_ enough to do business with
2. That the benefits you claim are _ACHIEVABLE_, and
3. That the benefits you claim are _ACHIEVABLE BY HIM_ (people often believe results are achievable for other people, but not for themselves).

Website credibility is a crucial factor to getting your sales letter read. But it only proves that you are trustworthy enough to do business with. By itself, it won't convince your prospects that your product provides any valuable benefits to them. This is where the good old fashion credibility techniques popular in direct mail come in.

This section discusses the time-proven credibility techniques which you can use to convince your prospect that the BENEFITS you claim are not just hot air, but achievable and achievable by him.

Confession 31 -- Include Markers Of Your Expertise

Expertise is a key component of credibility. The Stanford University studies found that sales pages that convey expertise, gain credibility in the visitor's eyes.

You can build your expertise by doing the following:

- Start by listing your credentials. This might include books that you've written, the number of years experience you have had, and tertiary qualifications you have obtained.

- List any awards that you or your product has won. If possible, provide a picture of the award or organization's logo for more visual impact.

- List the respected associations you may be a member of. If possible, you should also try to provide a picture of the logo for more visual impact.

Here is another example from Corey Rudl's website and it's one of the best examples I have seen.

Real-world proof that our blockbuster strategies will explode your income

Over 360,000 businesses -- including Apple and Xerox -- already rely on us for the latest, most potent online marketing information. Many have dominated their markets. [Marker of expertise and implied endorsement]

And hundreds of "mom and pop" businesses (who don't even have web sites!) have doubled and tripled their incomes **with our e-mail secrets alone**.

Of course, before I go further, I should tell you a bit about the successes I've personally had in the real world -- **using the SAME**

---

online marketing strategies you're about to discover:

- For the last three years, my course *"The Insider Secrets to Marketing Your Business on the Internet"* has outsold all other Internet marketing courses online. And my customers are so thrilled with my strategies, over 99% of them subscribe to my newsletter, too. This level of customer satisfaction is unheard of. To read testimonials from my customers, click here. `[Marker of expertise, testimonials, and opportunity to verify claim]`

- Not only do I have more customers than any other online marketing publisher. I also have more affiliates (i.e. customers with web sites who recommend my course to their visitors). And I get far more referrals from my affiliates than any other Internet marketing publisher. This is one more example of how I outperform my competitors, using the same strategies I teach you. `[Marker of expertise, implied endorsement from affiliates and opportunity to verify claim]`

- I rarely have time to consult anymore, but when I do, clients consider my rate of $1,280 per hour a bargain. And some clients want me so badly, they offer me a big portion of the revenue I help them generate. (If you'd like to get on my client waiting list, e-mail me directly at rudl@marketingtips.com). `[Marker of expertise]`

- I attract over 450,000 visitors to my web sites every week. (Just look at my web page counters.) With one small office and 11 employees, my four online businesses broke $6.6 million last year in gross revenue. That's over $472,000 per employee -- even more than Microsoft makes on a per employee basis -- and unthinkable to most offline businesses. Click here to find out how you can use Hotbot, AltaVista, or Alexa to verify the popularity of my web sites. `[Marker of expertise and opportunity to verify claim]`

- ▪ Because I've personally profited from the strategies I teach, Maury Povich featured me on his TV show... And owners of web businesses practically fight to secure seats at <u>the conferences I occasionally speak at</u>. (Which always sell out at $1,500 - $5,000 per seat.) [Marker of expertise and opportunity to verify claim]

Here's a picture of me on the Maury Povich TV Show:

Here's <u>a statement for the VISA/Mastercard account</u> I use for The Internet Marketing Center. These deposits are over $500,000 every month... `[Marker of expertise and opportunity to verify claim]`

For another of my products, about 20% of the orders go to an 800# live operator service, and I receive a check every two weeks. Here's a <u>scan of a couple of these checks</u> (which represent my profits after all expenses have been deducted). `[Marker of expertise and opportunity to verify claim]`

Confession 32 -- Use Testimonials That Sell

Ask yourself this question. How many sales letters have your read which didn't have a testimonial of some kind attached? The answer should be none!

Testimonials are perhaps the best method of all to building your credibility. They prove that ordinary people have used your product and gotten results!

Do not write a letter without using testimonials in it to prove your point. You can never use too many! In fact, the more the merrier.

Getting testimonials isn't as hard as one would think. You can obtain a flood of testimonials by sending evaluation forms with your products (see Confession # 6 for more details).

Or, if you are starting from scratch with a new product, you could form a 'user group' and give your product away for free to group members. You could then monitor/supervise the progress of group members to ensure they achieve results, and then obtain comments from them as testimonials. Simple!

When you are sourcing testimonials, try to keep these points in mind to make them more persuasive:

- Try to make the testimonial specific. "I lost 10 lbs in 10 weeks" is more persuasive than "I lost weight".

- Try to get a testimonial for every benefit you are promoting.

- Try to include the person's name, photograph, website address, business name, age and any other personal details that may be applicable. This makes the person giving the testimonial more personal to your prospects (you may have to bribe the person giving the testimonial to provide these details… a free ebook normally does the trick).

- Try to include contact details of the person giving the testimonial. It gives your prospects the option of contacting the person, providing even more credibility to his statement.

- Try to highlight testimonials using a Johnson Box (see Confession # 41) to make them stand out. Testimonials are extremely powerful persuaders so you should do everything you can to get them read.

The following page contains an excellent example of these techniques in actions from Corey Rudl's 'Insider Secrets' page (http://www.marketingtips.com/t.cgi/648471):

"My phones have been ringing off the hook! **I sold over $3,500 in goods and services in three days!** It's the first time in five months that anyone had really purchased anything, and to think I was just days away from giving up... Corey, your advice saved my business plan."

Preston Reuther of Preston J. Reuther's School for Making Wire Jewelry
http://www.Wire-Sculpture.com

"I just wanted to say thanks to you. **I have made close to $300,000 this year from my site!** Ca-ching! By far the most I've ever made in my life. Applying all the concepts in your great course really made all the difference..."

Ken Calhoun
http://www.daytraginguniversity.com/

"After reading Corey Rudl's course, I can HONESTLY say **I have doubled and even tripled my income** -- to say our sales went up would be an understatement... A small sample -- by using Corey's techniques we TRIPLED [3X] click thru's on banners, and quintupled [5x] click thru's on links... **over $50,000 in EXTRA sales** can be attributed directly to Corey's techniques this year already!"

David Belton of BECANADA.COM
http://www.becanada.com
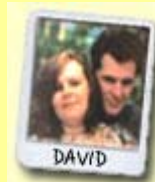
Click here to read more testimonials.

Confession 33 -- Use The Endorsement Of Someone Well Respected By Your Target Market

Endorsements from well known and well respected authorities or celebrities can be just as powerful and persuasive as testimonials.

Some potential endorsers to look for include:

- A consultant respected and well known by your target market.
- A well known and respected speaker or trainer in your industry.
- A movie star, athlete or celebrity whom your target market respects.
- A well known and noted author who has written for your target market.

Celebrity endorsers tend to charge for endorsements so they will probably be out of your price range.

But there is a good chance the other endorsers above may give you an endorsement for free. Just send a copy of your product to them with a little note asking them for some feedback.

Don't send them a brochure or picture of your product, send them the actual product. If you are selling a service, then offer it to them for free (if possible).

You won't get replies from all of them. But you only need a few good ones to build your credibility. You'll also need their permission to print the endorsement on your site.

Try to speak to them on the phone about your product so you can expand their comments into more powerful endorsements (follow the same rules for creating powerful testimonials).

Don't get pushy though. Otherwise you might find yourself getting negative publicity from them instead of positive (particularly if they publish an ezine or write for a magazine). If you feel a little uneasiness from them, back off and

thank them for their time. A poorly worded endorsement is better than bad publicity and no endorsement at all.

Here's an example of an excellent endorsement I gleaned from Dan Kennedy's Copywriting-Seminar-In-A-Box page (http://www.dankennedyonline.com).

"...The results were phenomenal! We took in over $1,895,000.00 (yes, almost two million dollars!!!) on this single promotion!"

As you know, we've been active players in the world of Direct Response Marketing for over 10 years….And we thought we'd heard everything there was to hear.…But we were dead wrong! We left Phoenix on Friday afternoon with dozens of powerful strategies that we couldn't wait to put into our up-and-coming promotions. And, the first promotion we wrote when we got home was the single most powerful sales letter we ever produced in the history of our company!

The results were phenomenal! We took in over $1,895,000.00 (yes, almost two million dollars!!!) on this single promotion! It all came rushing in like a raging river over a 30-day period between December 5th and the first of the New Year! And we wrote this history-breaking sales letter right after we left your Seminar using your techniques! I know in my heart that we would have NEVER achieved EVEN HALF of this response had it not been for all the awesome tips, tricks, and strategies we discovered at your Seminar!"

- Eileen and T.J. Rohleder
M.O.R.E. Inc.
Goessell, Kansas

Confession 34 -- Use Newspaper And Magazine Articles

Newspaper and magazine articles are very powerful credibility boosters. People are much more likely to believe a newspaper article than a display ad or sales letter.

In the direct mail world, mail order marketers often include reprints of articles in their mail pieces as proof of a specific claim.

You could do the same on-line by scanning a printed article onto a separate web page (with permission of the copyright owner of course) and providing a link to it on your web page. The text could read something like this:

> Because benefit X works so well, it was featured in Magazine Y (Click here to view a scan of that article).

Search your local library and the Internet for news articles relating to your product to see if you can find anything relevant.

Write An Editorial Report

If you can't find any articles relating to your product claims, here's a little secret which you can use as an alternative. Write an editorial style report (a report that reads like it's a news article) and paste it onto a separate page on your site. Provide text similar to this:

> Because benefit X works so well, it was featured in this special report (Click here to view this report).

The editorial writing style will make the report credible. But you must make sure that 1) you only quote factual material, and 2) you avoid any sort of salesmanship. If you don't follow these two rules, you may find yourself hurting the credibility of your message and, even worse, in trouble with the law.

Here's another example of this technique from Corey Rudl's 'Insider Secrets' page (http://www.marketingtips.com/t.cgi/648471):

> ### How many other "how to" publishers show you proof of their incomes?
>
> If you're already convinced that the Internet is the biggest opportunity in decades, keep reading. If not, <u>click here</u> to read a shocking study. [Note: The link takes you to a <u>self published</u> article quoting numerous independent studies]

Approach A Trade Magazine And Offer To Write An Article

This is another dirty little trick and may or may not be easier than you think. Many smaller magazines struggle to create good content for their sites. So when you contact the editor and offer to write an article for them, they are often more than willing to consider what you've got to submit.

If this is the case, write up a highly educational article and submit it to the publisher. The article doesn't necessarily have to relate to your product as long as it is published in a magazine or journal relevant to your market.

If your article gets published, scan it onto another page and provide a link to it. Once you've done this, publicize the fact that you sometimes write for the magazine in your letter. This does nothing really for your product, but it goes a long way to building your trust and credibility as a salesman.

Confession 35 -- Quote Research That Supports Your Claims

Independent research is highly credible. If you can find some research that supports a claim about your product, quote it in your sales letter. If the research is reported on-line, provide a link to it after you've quoted it. If it's not on-line, try and get permission to put it on-line at your web site on a separate page.

If you've done your own research, write an editorial style report about it and include it in your site like the example in Confession # 34.

Confession 36 -- Use Product Comparisons And Reviews Conducted By Independent Organizations

Independently conducted product comparisons and reviews are another highly persuasive credibility builder, particularly if done by a well respected organization. If you are fortunate enough to have a favorable comparison/review from one of these firms, then link to it from your site. An example of this might be an 'Editor's Pick' from ZDNet.com.

Submit Your Product To Review Sites

There are a ton of review sites online. Just search for them at your favorite search engine to see if there are any relating to your product/market. If there are, send them your product for review.

Of course, this strategy only works if you sell a good product. If you don't, you will only get a bad review, and that review will sit on that site for all to see. The moral of the story - only submit your product if it's good.

Get A Review From A Friend

If you can't find a relevant authority to review your site, then you could use this sneaky little trick instead. Simply approach a friend who has a website and ask him to do up a review of your product.

The review should be written in an editorial style (in other words, like a news article review) and of course, be favorable for your product.

When the review is finished, ask him to upload it to his website. You now have a positive independent review of your product which you can link to. It's not the best option in the world, but it's better than nothing.

Confession 37 -- Use Photographic Evidence Of Your Claims In Action

Like the old saying goes, *'pictures paint a thousand words'*. Pictures can be used to provide undisputable physical evidence of your claims in action.

Weight loss products always include 'before and after' photos of their testimonial subjects to prove how much weight they've lost. Jump training programs often show people slam dunking a basketball to demonstrate how they can jump. Business courses sometimes provide scanned pictures of checks to prove how much money their methods make.

If you use a picture, follow the design rules outlined in Section 5 to ensure they influence your prospect's readership positively.

SECTION 4 – WEB PAGE DESIGN

Good sales letters are a double act between powerful copy and persuasive web design. If the copy is Holmes, the design is Watson. If the copy is gin, the design is tonic. If the copy is Shaquille O'Neil slam dunking a basketball, then the design is Kobe Bryant passing the ball to him.

Web page design seeks to serve 3 major functions:

1. To build credibility (already discussed in section 3)
2. To get the words read
3. To guide your reader through your letter

This section discusses the little known design techniques that actually <u>encourage</u> readership of your letter. It also discusses the common design mistakes that do the opposite, that is, discourages readership.

Some of these techniques have already been discussed (Sub headlines, bullet points and 'you' derivatives) so we won't refer to them again. But it may pay to re-read these techniques in conjunction with this section.

Confession 38 -- Keep Your Color Scheme Clean

S tudies have proven many times over that black text on white background is best for reading. In fact, testing in direct mail has found that fancy overlays such as water-marks and artsy layouts actually <u>hinder</u> response.

Whether it is a sales letter written on paper or web copy typed in HTML, the message is simple, keep your background white and your text black. That's not to say that all the background has to be white, just the part that your text goes.

Let us look at two web pages as an example. The first web page has a blue background. The copy is inserted in the table which has a white background.

Now let's look at the same copy, used on a colored background.

The second page is much harder to read and is harder on the eyes. OK. It's not impossible to read, but it certainly isn't as clear and easy to read as the first example. The result will be that more of the white background page will be read than the yellow background page.

Remember, your goal is to get your page read so you must make it as readable to your visitor as possible. Stay away from colored backgrounds because they place more strain on your reader's eye so are less likely to be read… and if your copy does not get read, you cannot make a sale!

Confession 39 -- Avoid Links And Banners That Drive Traffic Away From Your Offer

Do not clutter your web page with banners, buttons and links that present different headlines, copy and call to actions. Your primary aim is to get your message read. The last thing you want is for your visitor to arrive at your site, only to leave 5 seconds later because he clicked on a banner ad!

Think carefully before placing any links or banners within the first fold of your web site. This is where you should be directing visitors towards your offer, not away from your site! Leave links and banners to the content based sites. Don't use them on your direct response web site!

Confession 40 -- How To Attract More Attention To Your Headline

There are a number of ways in which you can make your headline more pronounced to increase the chances of readership. These techniques are discussed below. It may pay to test various combinations of these techniques to determine the most optimal (in a recent test, I surprisingly found that a change of font and super headline resulted in a increased response of 300%… even though the main headline remained the same).

Use A Larger Font

Make the font size larger than the rest of the page. I would suggest a font size of around 16 point, however I have seen some headlines up to 32 points in size.

Use A Different Font

Use a different font type than the rest of the page. Some common headline fonts include Arial, Century School Book, Verdana, Helvetica and Times New Roman. These fonts are easy on the eyes and clear to read. Don't use fonts that are difficult to read such as Dolphin, Academy Engraved, Tiranti Solid or Surfer.

Use A Different Font Color

Use a different font color than the rest of the page. Blue is a color used often in direct mail however it can confuse visitors on-line as they may think it's a link. Red is a great alternative, otherwise plain black may do.

Consider Super And/Or Sub Headlines

Consider the use of super headlines and sub-headlines. Super headlines are those introductory lines above the main headline that help set the scene for the major headline to follow through. Sub headlines are those lines after the main headline that merely expands on the idea conveyed. Super and sub headlines are published

in a smaller and sometimes different font than the main headline to make them more pronounced.

Use Quotation Marks

Place quotation marks around a headline. According to master copywriter Brian Keith Voyles, quotation marks around a headline increases believability and recall-ability by 28%.

Emphasize Impact Words

Emphasize words that have the biggest impact. You can do this with bold, italic, capitals or colored text. Just be careful not to over emphasize too many words as it tends to dilute the effect.

Use A Picture To Attract Attention To Your Headline

You'll find out more about this technique in the next chapter, so I won't explain it in detail here. But in brief, you can place a picture on the left-hand side of the headline to attract your reader to the main headline. Just follow the picture rules outlined in the next chapter!

Here's an excellent example of these points in action from Corey Rudl's Insider Secrets' web page (http://www.marketingtips.com/t.cgi/648471).

Super Headline –
The headline above
main headline.

Quotation marks to
increase readability

Main Headline

Sub Headline –
The headline below
the main headline

Picture used to
attract attention to
the headline utilizing
'the law of
proximity'.

Different font styles, types and colors
used in super headline, main headline
and sub headline to make each stand out
from the other and normal body copy.

Confession 41 -- Highlight Text To Create Fixing Points And Encourage Readership

Before I start on this subject, I want to introduce you to some important studies conducted by Professor Siegfried Voegele, so you know why highlighting text is so important to the readership of your letter.

Professor Voegele used eye-camera technology to follow the precise eye movement of several thousand subjects as they read a sales letter. This is what he found:

1. Readers usually start at the top of a letter then skip down the page to see who the author is. This process is known as the 'glance'.

2. Readers will generally follow the classic pattern of left-to-right, top-to-bottom. The reader's eye will start at the top right of the page, then move to the immediate left, before moving down the page in a sideways "U" shape (left to right pattern). They will then exit at the lower right of the page. This is known as the 'Z' pattern and is illustrated on the next page.

3. Whilst skipping down the page, readers will pause for brief fractions of a second to take in highlighted words. These pauses are known as 'fixations' and last an average of 2/10ths of a second.

4. The average time between fixations is known as a 'jump' and lasts an average of 1-5/100ths of a second.

5. The tolerance level for an A4 spread is about 10 fixing points per page. This tolerance level rises to about 15 for an A3 spread.

6. The 'glancing' process takes a reader an average of 2 seconds per A4 page to perform.

7. Once the reader discovers who has written the letter (identified from the signature) they will read the Post Script 90% of the time.
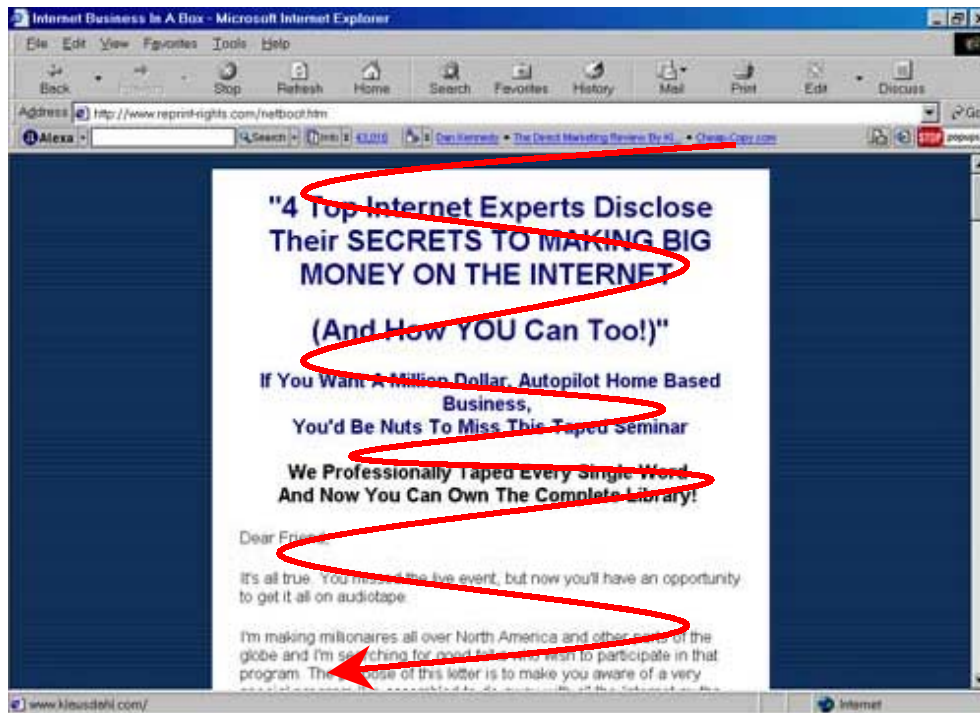
8. At this point, the reader makes a decision on whether to go again or quit. Professor Voegele attributed the decision making to a count. He estimated that 5 beneficial fixation points taken in from an A4 page would cause that page to be upgraded to a scan. Others argue that 1 highly beneficial fixation will also achieve the same result.

9. If readers decided to go again, they would begin the 'scanning' process. The scan is all about gathering hard evidence to justify a read, and more copy will be taken in during this process than the glance, including whole headlines, pictures, captions and sub headlines.

10. When readers begin the scan, they will either go back to the top of the letter and start again, or go back to the fixations that left an impression on them for further investigation.

11. If there was a picture at the top of the page, readers generally went there to look at the picture before moving back to the fixation points.

12. What happens next isn't as clear cut. Some readers will conduct an in-depth read. Others will read various sections of the letter or keep scanning for more information.

I've taken you through this research so you understand just how important highlighting text is to getting your letter read. It must be in harmony with your sales rational to lead your readers logically through a path of persuasion.

Highlighting Techniques

While Professor Voegele's study made no attempt to determine how different type faces affect readership, a number of other studies have come up with these conclusions:

- Larger text is noted before smaller text.
- Handwriting is noted before printed text.
- Underline text is noted before regular text.
- Text with yellow background gains more attention than any other background color.
- Short words and short lines are more read than long words and long lines.
- Short paragraphs are given greater attention than long paragraphs.
- Numbers are noted before longer words.
- Copy within a border will be read before "open" text.

With this in mind, here are some tips for highlighting text to attract attention and create fixation points. Just be careful what you highlight. Professor Voegele's studies found that when there are too many fixation points on a letter, a reader's tendency is to ignore them all.

You can get around this to a degree by using a combination of highlighting techniques rather than just one. Just don't go overboard.

Bold, Underline and *Italics*

The use of bold, underlining or *italics* is a great way of highlighting text. But only use it to highlight blocks of 1 to 3 words in length. According to European copywriting legend Christain H. Godefroy, when more than 3 words are highlighted, the text becomes too large for a scanning eye to digest.

Also, when you underline text on a page, make sure your text and underline color isn't blue. On the Internet, <u>blue underline</u> is considered to be hyper-linked text, and this will only confuse and irritate your reader.

Yellow Highlighting

Coloring the text background is another great highlighting technique. If you use this technique, make sure you use <mark>yellow background with black text</mark> as studies have shown this to provide the greatest level of contrast to the eye out of all color combinations. You can color your text's background by using the following HTML code:

```
<font style="Background: Yellow">Your Highlighted Text Here</font>
```

This technique can be used to highlight a whole sentence to half guarantee that it will be read during the scanning process. You could even increase the chances of it getting read by bolding, <u>underlining</u> and *italicizing* a small block of 1 to 3 highly beneficial words within that sentence to act as a fixation during the glance.

Although this technique is very effective in getting a sentence read, it is also very distracting to the eye. It should never be used in such a way that more than two highlighted backgrounds are visible on a browser at any one time.

Font Color

You can also use a different font color to attract attention to a block of text. Red attracts the most attention so this would be the color to use, although Blue is another alternative.

This technique is often used for sub headlines to make them stand out more. But it is also used to highlight something of urgency in the body copy, such as a deadline or limited offer. If you use this technique in the body copy, use a red font as opposed to blue. A blue font in your body looks too much like a link and will confuse your prospect.

Indenting Text Groupings

Indenting a text grouping is a great way of drawing attention to an entire paragraph. You could even use a different font type, size or color to make the paragraph stand out even more. Here's an example from Ken Evoy's 'Make Your Words Sell' site (http://myws.sitesell.com):

> Phew! Just as I thought this was the most complete book about copywriting, online or off, anywhere... yup, Ken had an extra idea. Will I ever get my life back??...
>
> ```
>     Joe, you know those books of power words?
>     How bogus, right? But what if you pulled
>     out the most important, useful and
>     usable, words... Group them according to
>     WHEN to use them. And explain exactly HOW
>     to use them?
>
>     Joe, would that be helpful?
> ```
>
> Hey, would a remote-controlled golf ball help golfers??? One more puddle later...

The Johnson Box

A Johnson box is simply a box placed around a paragraph. They are an even better way of highlighting a paragraph than indenting. They should be reserved to only highlight the _biggest benefits_ in your letter, such as your propositions, guarantees, testimonials and maybe even case studies.

If you use them, don't include more than 2 -3 medium sized paragraphs in them. Any more than this and the box will appear intimidating to a reader and consequently be less read.

Here's an example of a Johnson Box from Corey Rudl's 'Insider Secrets' page (http://www.marketingtips.com/t.cgi/648471):

I don't know of any other Internet marketing book or course, at any price, that can make these claims. Do you?

> Best of all, there's no need to make a decision until after you've used and profited from my strategies for an entire year. That way, you can convince yourself of its value. You have nothing to lose.
>
> I also guarantee that if you implement any three of my strategies, you will at least double your profits in less than a year. And if for some odd reason my strategies don't work for your business (very unlikely), just send the course back. It costs you nothing.
>
> Finally, if you order by January 17, 2003 , I'll show you how confident I am by backing up my guarantee with $798 worth of gifts and a (unheard of) $200 cashier's check -- which I'll send you as compensation, if for any reason my course doesn't deliver.

This is my complete marketing system. It's two beefy three-ring binders, packed with the **same tested and proven fast-growth strategies I personally used** to build my one-man business into a $6.6 million enterprise -- in just three years. And they're completely updated. This is the same system my protégés have used to drive truckloads of cash out of the Internet.

Pictures

Nothing affects readership more than a picture, and you can use this to attract attention to a sub-headline or block of text. When skimming down your page, visitors will naturally focus their attention to the picture and then quickly glance at the text in the nearest proximity.

So placing a picture in close proximity to text you want read is a very effective way of getting it read. We discuss the use of pictures in more detail in the next chapter (Confession # 42).

Handwriting

This technique is used with great success in the direct mail industry. However, it is one that I haven't seen too much of on the net. Dan Kennedy calls it *'junking it up'* and it involves adding handwritten notes onto a mail piece to make it appear like it was added at the last moment.

This technique works well because people naturally read handwriting before typeface. Although there are not many examples of the 'junking' technique on the net, I did manage to find one on Ken Evoy's 'Make Your Words Sell' site.

It's very simple...

If MYWS! does not deliver what you need and expect, tell me. I will refund you right away.

That's more than a guarantee. It's my personal promise.

Sincerely,
Ken

No strings.

No ifs, ands or buts.

No time limits.

And no questions asked.

Just ask for your money back and SiteSell.com will refund you.
I doubt if you will ask, though, because once you turn the last page...

What To Highlight

Professor Voegele recommends that you only highlight elements that provide a _benefit_ to your reader, as they are the elements the reader is most likely to return to.

Dan Kennedy's recommendation, although not as scientific, is probably more helpful to you. He recommends highlighting enough elements in your letter so that readers will actually _"get it"_ if they only scan your letter.

Try to consider both pieces of advice when you highlight your text.

Confession 42 -- Use Pictures To Positively Influence Readership

No element of your sales letter plays a greater role in determining the pattern of readership than pictures. They are used with great success in direct mail and print advertising. However, due to their negative effect on download time, pictures are not as popular on-line.

I have <u>not</u> discussed the following techniques to encourage you to fill your site up with pictures. Rather, the techniques have been discussed to ensure that any pictures you do use are used correctly. Pictures do eat up your download time so I recommend you test all pictures to ensure they 'earn' their place on your site.

How Pictures Affect Readership, And How To Use This On Your Letter

The Law Of Proximity

When readers see a picture on a sales letter, they perceive whatever is closest to the item to be related to it. They will therefore look at the picture, and then move to the nearest bit of text.

This behavior is called 'The Law of Proximity' and it can be used to gain attention to important elements in your sales letter. So if you use a picture, always place relevant copy that fires your biggest benefits as close to the picture as possible.

Gaze Motion

When an animate or inanimate object faces towards a specific direction, readers will generally look at the object, and then look to the direction the object is facing.

This is known as 'Gaze Motion'. For example, a picture of a human model staring at, let's say the price on your page, will generally result in the reader looking at the human model then following the model's stare to the price.

The same readership pattern occurs with inanimate objects as well. So if you use a picture, make sure it is facing towards your copy. Imagine how a reader would react if an ebook cover faced towards the blank outside of your sales letter rather than in?

Structural Motion

When there is something within an illustration which "points," the eyes will generally flow in that direction. This is known as 'Structural Motion'.

In one of Professor Voegele's tests for example, there was an illustration of a model wearing a blouse with a man-style tie. The reader's eyes followed right down the tie to its pointed end and then focused on the slacks the model was wearing, failing to observe the blouse which was being sold. So if you use a picture, make sure structural motion has a positive effect on it rather than a negative one.

Attention Factors

If you want a picture to gain maximum attention, then here are some facts that you should consider:

- Action pictures attract more attention than still pictures.
- Pictures of people gain more attention than pictures of products (If featured in the same shot, readers will concentrate more on the human than the product)
- Attractive people gain more attention then unattractive people.
- Children gain more attention than adults.
- Large groups of people attract more attention than smaller groups.
- Portraits gain more attention than full pictures.
- Color pictures gain more attention than black and white pictures.
- Vertical shapes gain more attention than horizontal
- Circles gain more attention than squares
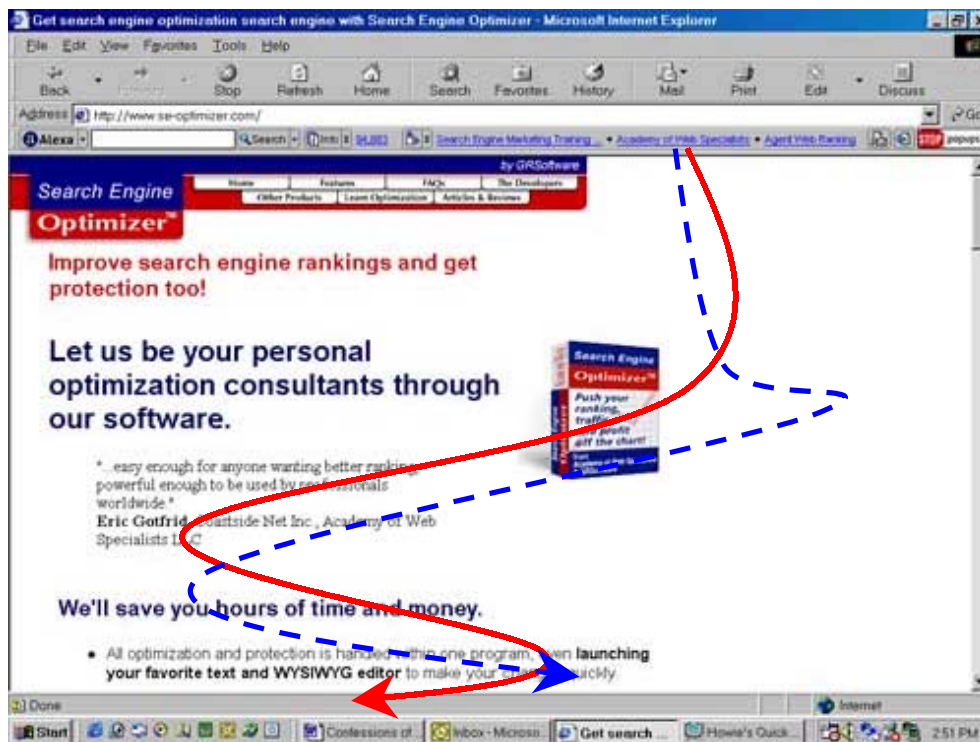
Affect On The Z Pattern

When graphic elements are added to a page, continuous eye flow is interrupted as the eyes are drawn away from the copy towards the graphic.

If a picture is on the far left of the page, the reader's sideways "U" shape tends to expand, taking in more of the left-hand side of the page. If a picture is on the right-hand side of the page, the reader's "U" pattern shortens, reducing the amount he takes in from the left-hand side.

So what does this mean to you the copywriter? It means that you should try to place pictures on the left-hand side of your page so readers cover more of your copy. Avoid placing pictures on the right-hand side, and _never place them on the bottom right_ of your page as it will draw your reader immediately to the exit position and reduce the amount of attention given to your entire presentation.

Examples In Action

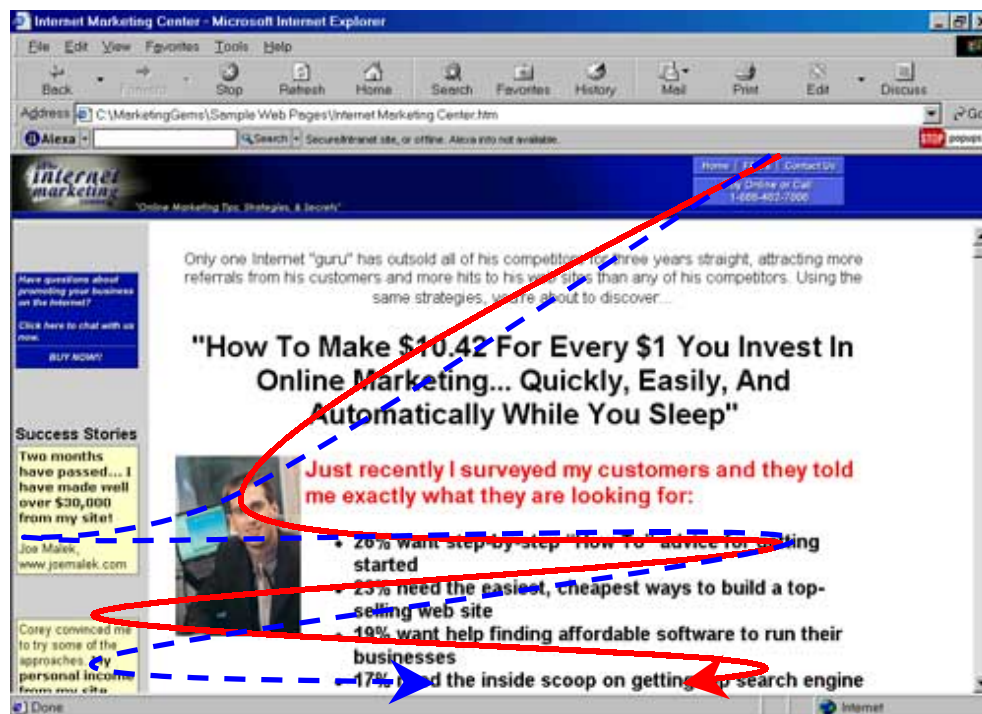Below is an example of _what not to do_.

The graphic is on the right hand side of the page and facing out away from the text.

Here, readers will be drawn to the graphic first. They will then either follow the 'Z' pattern behavior and look at the sub headline (represented by the solid line) or follow the graphic's gaze motion and look at a sea of nothingness (represented by the dashed line).

Either way, the main headline will more than likely be missed during the initial 'glance'.

Here's an example of *what to do instead* from Corey Rudl's 'Insider Secrets' page (one more reason why I love reading Corey's sales material).

The graphic is on the left hand side of the page and facing slightly away from the headline to a testimonial.

Here, readers will be drawn to the graphic first. They will then either follow the 'Z' pattern behavior and look at the headline (represented by the solid line) or

follow Corey's gaze motion and look at a testimonial (represented by the dashed line).

If they follow the 'Z' pattern, they will probably still look at the testimonial on the trip left again because the testimonial is highlighted in a 'Johnson' box.

If they follow Corey's gaze motion, they will still see the headline when they revert back to 'Z' pattern and look right again. Either way Corey wins.

A Final Word On Pictures

I'll repeat what I said in the introduction, the above techniques have been discussed to ensure the pictures on your site influence your reader in a positive way rather than a negative one. They have not been discussed to encourage you fill your site up with huge amounts of pictures.

Remember, words sell, not graphics. If visitors spend the first 10 seconds at your site trying to figure out how to make your long Flash presentation stop, or waiting for large graphics to load, you can be sure that they are not going to stick around.

While there is a time and place for graphics and animation, be certain that if you have chosen to include any on your site, you have done so to strategically enhance your message and illustrate a benefit -- not for your own self-gratification. Your friends and family will be far more impressed by the long-term profits your site generates than by flashy, spinning images.

Confession 43 -- Use A Font That Is Pleasing To Your Reader's Eye

Fonts can influence the readership of your letter. This has been proven in a number of readership studies, such as the Australian typography studies quoted in the October and November 1986 issues of Indicia. Here are some of the findings discovered in these studies which you should implement on your page.

Font Types

Studies have shown the 'Times New Roman' font to be the easiest font for the human eye to follow and read. Therefore, 'Times New Roman' should be the font in which your body copy is displayed. Other fonts found to be acceptable in these studies include `Courier New` and **Verdana.**

Serif and Sans Serif fonts such as 'Arial' are actually harder for a reader's eye to read. Granted, they are not impossible to read, but skimming eyes will take in less of your copy if written in 'Arial' than it would if written in 'Times New Roman'.

Now I've read some advice from some pretty well respected copywriters that 'Arial' font is actually better to use on the Internet than Times New Roman. They claim it has something to do with the way in which people read from a monitor as opposed to the way people read from a piece of paper.

Unfortunately, I cannot find a single study about this phenomenon anywhere, and I've searched extensively. Even the copywriters who make these claims come up short when asked for hard evidence. So I recommend using 'Times New Roman' over 'Arial' and simply ask anyone who argues to *'Show Me The Money!''*

Font Sizes

An 8 pt font _(like this) is a little too small to read and a 14 pt font (like this) is a little too big. 10 pt and 12 pt fonts have been proven to be just right so these are the sizes you should use in your body copy.

Font Colors

As mentioned previously, studies have proven many times over that black text on white background is best for reading. The moral of the story is to always use a black font in your body copy. Don't go using colored fonts like blue, red or green (unless you are highlighting text) as it strains the eye and consequently discourages readership.

Avoid CAPS

DON'T TYPE ALL YOUR COPY WITH THE "CAPS LOCK" ON. NOT ONLY IS IT SUPER DIFFICULT TO READ AND UNDERSTAND, BUT IT'S CONSIDERED TO BE "*SHOUTING!!!*" ON THE INTERNET.

Confession 44 -- Construct Your Paragraphs So They Increase Readability

The way in which text is laid out on a page actually affects how much readers take in. Seriously! Studies have proven that elements such as paragraph size and construction seriously impact the 'readability' of your letter.

Here are some layout tips that you should keep in mind to maximize the readership of your text.

Indent Your Paragraphs

You should indent your paragraphs to make the start of each new paragraph more clearly defined. An indent draws reader's eyes to the beginning of a paragraph, which usually results in a higher readership of the first sentence.

Use A Compelling First Sentence

Prospects reading a sales letter often skim the first sentence of a paragraph to determine whether the rest of the paragraph is worth reading.

If the first sentence is interesting or arouses curiosity, readers will often read the rest of the paragraph to find out more. If the sentence is of no interest to the reader, the rest of paragraph is often skipped.

You should therefore place the most compelling sentence at the beginning of a paragraph, to maximize the chances of the rest of it being read.

Use Short Paragraphs

Numerous studies have found big paragraphs achieve less readership than short paragraphs. The argument is that big paragraphs tend to be intimidating, so readers generally skip them.

These studies have also found that paragraphs of 4 lines or less achieve optimal readership. It therefore makes sense to keep your paragraphs to 4 lines or less to encourage more readership doesn't it?

Use Short Sentences

A readership study by Miles Tinker and Donald Patterson has found that lines of less than 22 characters, or more than 112 characters, slow reading down by five percent.

Optimum readership tends to occur when sentences are between 50 and 80 characters (including spaces), so this is how long your sentences should be.

Use Short Words

Back to Professor Voegele's studies, one of his key findings was the discovery of what he called 'filter' words. Filter words are words which actually discourage readership, and he found that words consisting of 3 or more syllables are one of those.

Alternatively, Professor Vogele found 1 to 2 syllable words to encourage readership. He also found that readers will tolerate copy that is made up of 5% to 10% filter words, before readership is affected.

After you've written your letter, go over it and replace as many 3 or more syllable words with shorter alternatives. A thesaurus will come in handy for this. Try to keep your filters under the 5% mark in your copy if possible.

Use Small Blocks Of Bullet Points

As previously discussed, bullet points generally receive a high degree of readership and act as fixations to scanning readers. They are a great way of communicating benefits to your readers.

But if you put tens of them together, one after the other, to create one giant block of bullets, the block becomes intimidating and will encourage your readers to skip past it.

You should therefore limit the size of your bullet blocks. Between 5 to 8 bullets in a row should be your maximum limit (although you might get away with 10 if the bullets themselves are short in length).

Look Out For Paragraphs Ending With 'One-Word Lines'

When paragraphs end with a one-word line, the last word acts as a fixation. That is, the eye is generally attracted to it. For example:

> Be pleased you did and we can help you to avoid
> *danger.*
> And that means one more benefit. You won't pay out
> *high charges.*
> Then it's guaranteed that we take out all the
> *risk.*

The fixing points above are *'danger', 'high charges'* and *'risk'*. Not very persuasive to the reader now is it? Of course, if the end words are good words then the reverse would be true.

Now here's the problem online. Your paragraphs will vary in size and shape depending on the browser setting of your visitors. So to avoid this problem, ensure the last 2 words in each paragraph are positive ones.

# Confession 45 -- Keep Your Download Time Under 8 Seconds

A study by NetMechanic.com has found that 1/3 of visitors leave a page if it isn't loaded within 8 seconds. That's a whopping 33% of your profits down the toilet before you even start. Download time is therefore the most critical design elements of your page. Here are some ways in which you can minimize your download time.

## Use Vertically Aligned Tables As Opposed To Giant Tables

Put your text in a number of <u>aligned</u> tables rather than a single <u>giant</u> table. This is one of the most common mistakes I see on-line. When you put text into a table, none of it will be displayed until the entire table and its contents have downloaded.

When you use a single giant table to store your sales letter, visitors could wait up to a minute before a headline is even displayed. That's way too long and a significant number of visitors will leave your site out of frustration.
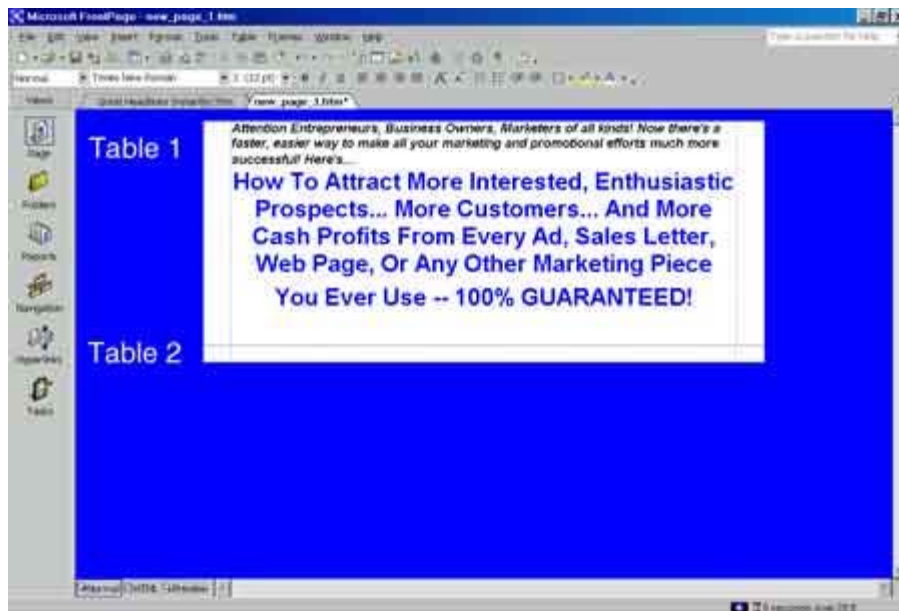
You should therefore break your text up into small chunks and paste each segment into a number of vertically aligned tables. Here's what I mean. Insert a table into your page like this.
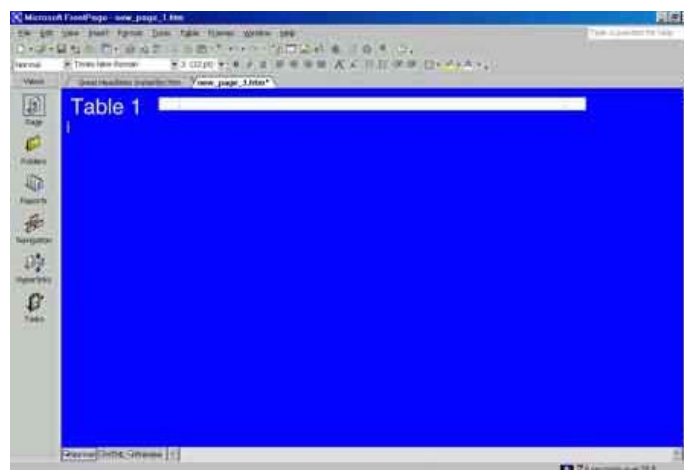
Now insert your headline into the table like this.
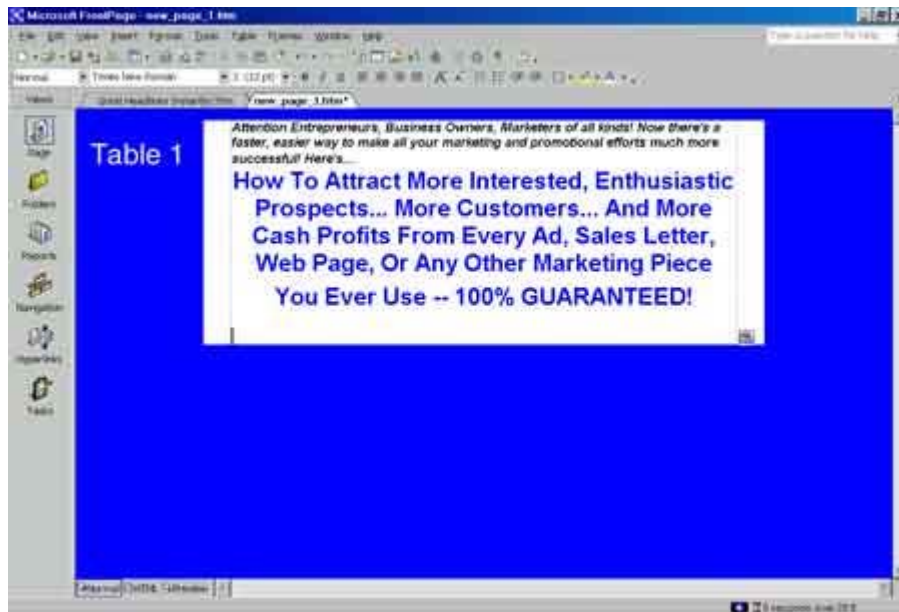
Now insert another table directly under table 1 like this.

Now insert the next piece of your sales copy in table 2 like this.

The first table will automatically display when its contents are loaded. Your visitor can then start reading while the other tables begin loading in the background. This allows your prospect to start reading your copy at the earliest possible point which in turn reduces the chances of him leaving from boredom.

Try to make each table download in less than 7 seconds on a 28 kb modem. As mentioned, visitors will start leaving your site if they have to wait more than 7 seconds for something to download.

Use Intriguing Joints

Use intriguing joints at the bottom of each table to keep your visitor interested while he waits for the next table to load. A joint is something curious at the end of one table that builds interest in the following table.

For example, if the bottom of one table had a sub headline that stated *"Why A 79 Year Old Master Trader 'Calls It Quits' And Finally Reveals The One Commodity Trading Strategy That Made Him Rich",* then your visitors will naturally become curious as to what this strategy is and why it's being revealed. This will result in your visitors waiting for the next table to load so they can discover the answer.

But if the bottom of that table had a plain old paragraph that stated *"The corner stone of Grandmill's Strategy is his forecasting graphs",* your visitor won't be left as curious and will be less likely to hang around to find out what the next table has to say.

So your best strategy is to make your joints as interesting as possible so your visitors will be compelled to hang around long enough for the next one to load.

I like to end my tables with sub headlines as they are more likely to be read and naturally call your reader to investigate the preceding paragraph. But it doesn't really matter what joint you use, just so long as it makes your visitor intrigued and/or curious as to what's next.

Include IMG Tag Attributes

You should add height, width and ALT attributes to your IMG tag so that the page text loads before the graphics. An IMG tag directs your prospects browser to download a picture on your page.

Without the height, width and ALT attributes, the browser will actually download the picture first, then the text. When you place the height, width and ALT attributes in the IMG tag, the browser will actually download the text first, then the picture, allowing visitors to start reading text at the earliest possible point.

Here's an example of an IMG tag with these attributes defined.

<img src="your.gif" height="200" width="300" alt="Web Copy Secrets Revealed">

Picture attribute	Height attribute	Width attribute	ALT attribute

Eliminate Unnecessary Graphics & Compress What's Left

Eliminate any unnecessary graphics. More graphics means more load time. Test every graphic to make them earn their place on your page. Be cut throat with this point. Too many sites have too many unnecessary graphics.

Compress any graphics that need to stay using the GIFbot at
http://www.netmechanic.com. The GIFbot will take any graphics that need to
stay on your site, and squeeze every unnecessary kb out of it. The smaller your
graphic file size, the faster the download. You could also use the free tool at
http://www.webattack.com/freeware/gmm/fwgcomp.shtml.

Also consider providing a link to another page to display a graphic. This might
be applicable for graphics such as scanned articles, pay checks and pictures of
your office.

SECTION 5 - TESTING

How do you know which offer to make? Or which headline to start with? Or which guarantee to use? Simple! You test both and see which one pulls best. There's really no other way.

Testing is nothing new in direct response advertising. Take a look at a quote from Claude C. Hopkins's book 'Scientific Advertising' written in early part of the 20th Century.

> *"One ad is compared with another, one method with another. Headlines, settings, sizes, arguments and pictures are compared. To reduce the cost of results even one per cent means much in some mail order advertising. So no guesswork is permitted. One must know what is best."*

The above quote is as true for the Internet today as it was in direct mail in the early part of the 20th century. Nothing has changed.

Consider this! I recently tested 2 headlines in a pop up window for my ezine. Except the headline, both pop ups were exactly the same. Yet one pop up pulled 300% more subscribers than the other.

That is 300% more profits without any more work. If I didn't test my copy, I would have never discovered this fact and would have cheated myself out of the profits that I deserved.

And that is nothing compared to Ted Nicholas who once increased an advertisement's response by 1800% from one split-testing of a headline.

There is no magic formula to writing profitable sales letters. Copywriting is really a just process of writing and testing until you find something profitable. You'll never know what works best in your letter until you experiment. This section is dedicated to helping you find the perfect letter through testing.

Confession 46 -- Proof Read Your Work And Invite Comments

Asurvey of the largest advertisers and advertising agencies in the United States has found that more than 80% of them pretest television commercials before airing them on a National basis. The pretest is typically done on the preliminary idea (e.g. using a story board) rather than the finished versions.

The same should apply for your sales letter. Instead of testing straight after the first draft is finished, take a day off, then come back and do the following:

1. Proofread it and correct any spelling errors.

2. Read it out aloud and consider changing anything you stumble on.

3. Have a kid aged between the sixth and eighth grade read it out aloud and consider changing anything that he/she stumbles on.

4. Upload your page to the Internet. Then go to your favorite Internet Marketing Discussion Forum and announce it. Ask for comments. You'll be surprised how many you'll get!

5. Ask your friends to check your site out but pretend that it's not yours. Tell them you're considering a purchase and you want their opinion. You'll get an honest answer that way.

6. View your Web pages in both Internet Explorer and Netscape to ensure they both look acceptable (minor changes will happen between the two browsers).

This will prevent any obvious errors from occurring right from the start. You can then start split testing once you have made the appropriate changes to your letter.

Confession 47 -- How To Split Test Your Web Page

In the mail order world, direct marketers test their sales letters by doing a split test. They achieve this by doing the following:

1. They start by writing two sales letters. Both letters would be exactly the same except for a single element (e.g. The headlines would be different).

2. They would then purchase a *sample* list of 10,000 names.

3. Sales letter 1 would be mailed to the first 5,000 names and sales letter 2 would be mailed to the second 5,000.

4. The letter that pulled the greatest response would become the control letter and the letter that produced the least response would be trashed.

5. The control letter would then continue to be split tested against other test letters until a profitable letter was discovered.

The above testing process in direct mail costs thousands of dollars to achieve. Fortunately the Internet allows us to test web pages in a much easier way. Here's how it works.

Step 1 – Determine What You're Testing

Before you start testing, you need to identify exactly what you want to test. Here are some of the elements you should consider:

Regular vs. Deluxe Product

Which do you offer first in your letter? The deluxe with an economy option or the regular with a deluxe option? If you have a regular and a deluxe option, test both to see which pulls better.

Bonuses

If your sales are really lagging, try to sweeten the deal with some more bonuses. The more the better! They don't have to be related to the product, just be something that your prospect wants.

Payment Proposition

Payment propositions can increase response substantially so it's worth your while testing a few to see which is most profitable for you? Try them all, then keep tabs of the responses _and_ returns to see which one works best.

Guarantee Propositions

Like payment propositions, guarantee propositions can also increase your response substantially. But they can also sting you if you get too many returns. Try different types of guarantees to find the one the gives you the biggest dividend.

Deadlines

See how limiting different elements of your offer affects your response.

The Copy

Copy is the most over rated part of your sales letter. It's the offer and product that really drives your sales. Nevertheless, copy does play a big part. Try testing these elements to see if you get a boost.

- Hard sell vs. Soft sell
- Short copy vs. Long copy (long almost always wins)
- Headlines
- Unique Selling Propositions
- Secondary response devices and offers
- Post Scripts
- Selling product first vs. Selling bonuses first

Timing

This is the most under-rated element of your letter. The table below shows the relative effectiveness of each month of the year (January is the most effective month, February is 96% as effective and so on).

100 = Most Responsive	
January	100
February	96
March	71
April	72
May	72
June	67
July	73
August	87
September	79
October	90
November	81
December	79

Step 2 – Design Your Web Page

Make an exact duplicate of your original web page. Then change the element being tested on your duplicate page. The duplicate now becomes your test page and the original now becomes your control. You can create as many test pages as you like, as long as you only test one element at a time.

Step 3 – Create An Order Link For Each Page

Create a separate order link (where your prospect clicks to go to the on-line order form) for each of your control and test pages. Then paste each order link into the relevant page.

This will allow you to track sales from each page. If you have an affiliate program, you could create an affiliate account for each page instead to achieve the same result.

Step 4 –Install A Rotator Script/Service

Install a rotator script on to your site, or utilize a rotating service. What happens is this. If 100 visitors go to the URL controlled by the rotator tool, 50 visitors will be sent to your control page and another 50 will be sent to your test page. This allows you to split test your pages against each other.

You can rotate your pages by using one of the following methods:

Manually

This is the simplest method to use. It involves uploading your control page for one week, then manually replacing it with your test page the following week. It is open to a bit of error however as differences in timing and lead qualification occur. Therefore, this option should only be used as a last resort.

The Ultimate Rotator Tool (http://www.goldbar.net)

This is by far the quickest and easiest method to use. Simply go to Ultimate Rotator Tool (at the Ultimate Marketer's Resource) and enter the pages you want rotated. The Ultimate Rotator Tool will then provide a URL address for you to use. Traffic visiting this link will then be redirected evenly amongst your control and test page(s).
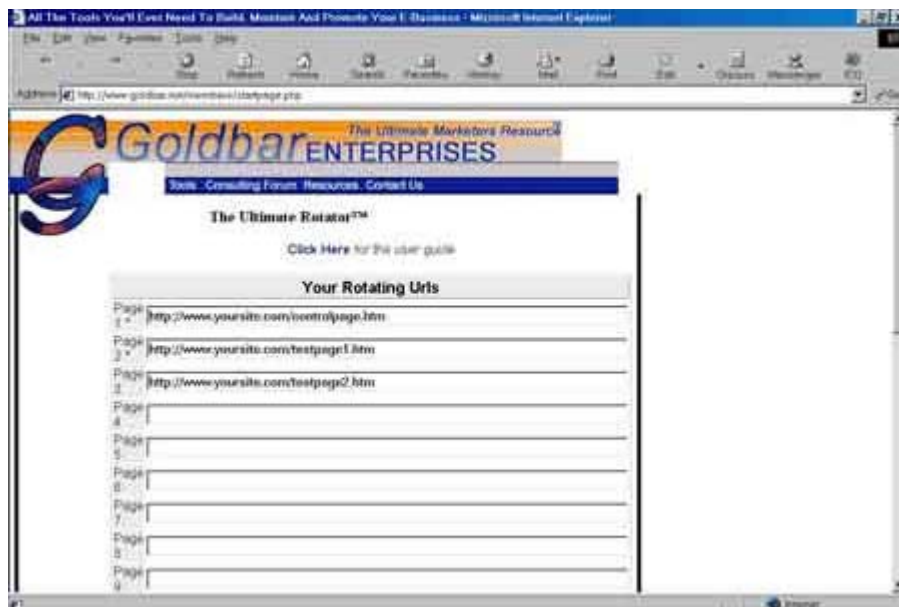
CGI Script

You can use a CGI script that does the exactly same thing as the Ultimate Rotator Tool. You can get this script free by going to Wes Blaylock's http://www.cgitoolbox.com. If you don't know anything about CGI, you can go over to http://www.elance.com and get someone to install it for you for around $50.

Java Script

If you cannot afford the Ultimate Rotator Tool or the installation cost of a CGI script, you can use the java script below.

Copy below this line

```
<BODY onload=gettime()>
<script language=javascript>
function gettime() {
now = new Date()
if (now.getDay() == 0){
window.location="http://www.yourwebsite.com/index1.html"
}
if (now.getDay() == 1) {
window.location="http://www.yourwebsite.com/index2.html"
}
if (now.getDay() == 2) {
window.location="http://www.yourwebsite.com/index3.html"
}
if (now.getDay() == 3) {
window.location="http://www.yourwebsite.com/index4.html"
}
if (now.getDay() == 4) {
window.location="http://www.yourwebsite.com/index5.html"
}
if (now.getDay() == 5){
window.location="http://www.yourwebsite.com/index6.html"
}
if (now.getDay() == 6){
window.location="http://www.yourwebsite.com/index7.html"
}
}
</script>
</BODY>
```

Copy above this line

Simply copy and paste it into the body of your web page. Then change the 7 red URLs in the script (one for each day of the week) to the URLs of the pages you are testing. (e.g. Change http://www.yourwebsite.com/index1.html in the script to http://www.yoursite.com/test1 and so on).

Now every time visitors click on the URL to this page, they will be redirected to your control or test pages… depending on the day of the week. The problem with this method is that it won't necessarily split traffic evenly to each page.

Step 5 – Generate A Small Amount Of Traffic

Generate a small amount of traffic to your site using pay-per-click search engines or ezine advertising. These two forms of advertising provide the most qualified buyers to your site. If your page isn't profitable with visitors from these two forms of advertising, it is unlikely to be profitable with any other.

Step 6 – Analyze Your Traffic Reports and Results

After your test has finished, go to your traffic reports and examine exactly what you visitors did on each page. How long did they stay? Where did they go when they left? Did each page receive the same amount of traffic as the other pages?

Go to your affiliate accounts and see which page pulled the most sales and made the most profit.

Step 7 – Compare The Results

Compare the results of your test pages. Once you've found a profitable web page, you can start spending money on promoting it.

Items you should examine are:

Cost Per Visitor

If you spend $50 on an ad and it generates 100 unique visitors, then your cost per visitor is 50 cents.

Response Rate

If you make 2 sales from 100 unique visitors, then your response rate is 2%.

Profit Per Visitor

If you make $50 profit per sale and you get 2 sales from 100 unique visitors, then your profit per visitor is $1. Note: $1 per visitor should generally be your goal, however this depends on your product, industry and marketing objectives.

Anything Else Relevant

Think outside the box and think of other things that might be relevant to what you are testing. For example, if visitors only stay for a few seconds, you might want to change the headline, opening paragraphs or download time of your page.

Worksheet

Check out the 'Split Testing' worksheet at the end of this manual to easily calculate the most profitable copy from your split testing.

Step 8 – Repeat The Process

Repeat the process, even if you have found a profitable web page. You might just find a more profitable one on the way. Don't get caught up in it too much though. Leave it once your page is pulling a good response, making a profit and testing stops making a real difference.

FINAL THOUGHTS

There you have it… everything I basically know about sales letters on websites. Don't get overwhelmed by it all. Just concentrate on getting to know your market, creating a compelling offer, building credibility, and testing, and the rest should come naturally.

There is no real 'secret' to it. It's all just a matter of perseverance and hard work.

This should be more than enough to put you ahead of the pack and I hope it serves you well.

I've just got one little favor to ask you before I go. If this manual makes a difference to your business, can you please let me know.

For me, the pleasure comes from helping out the 'nice' people in this world, not just from the dollars in my pocket. Knowing how I've helped you gives me a satisfaction second only to that gained from my family.

So drop me a line and tell me all about your success. You can reach me by emailing webmaster@digital-copywriting.com.

Anyway, thanks for reading. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Lenny Eng

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

If you are interested in learning more about direct response copywriting , here is a list of resources which I highly recommend. I have each and every one at home and refer to them almost daily.

<u>"Dan Kennedy's Copywriting-Seminar-In-A-Box"</u> - Dan Kennedy routinely commands no less than $9,200.00 for the simplest letter or ad to $25,000.00 to $50,000.00 per copywriting project, <u>plus</u> royalties. And he literally has a waiting list business, with clients standing in line and patiently (or impatiently) waiting for him to fit them in. Dan has been paid as much as $50,000.00 <u>in royalties</u> from <u>one</u> letter. Nearly 70% of all clients hiring him to write copy once, return and continue. You've probably read letters or seen infomercials written by Dan without even knowing it.

His 'Copywriting Seminar-In-A-Box' product is a tape set of his advanced copywriting seminar that was attended by 115 people each paying $947 each. It is definitely one of the best copywriting resources you can get your hands on.
http://www.marketinggems.com/dankennedy.html

<u>"Make Your Words Sell"</u> is another fantastic resource is this ebook by Joe Robson and Ken Evoy MD. It's all about copywriting for sales letter web sites, on-line stores and email. Probably the best value copywriting. It is on my 'Must Have' list.
http://myws.sitesell.com
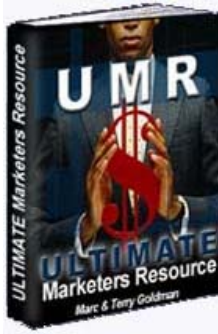
The "Ultimate Marketing Resource" is a highly recommended service. You get a plethora of marketing related tools including unlimited autoresponders, pop up window generators, unlimited surveys, list servers, web polls and rotator tools (for split testing web pages and pop ups) just to name a few. http://www.goldbar.net

I seriously recommend getting Robert Boduch's "Great Headlines Instantly". If you read and follow this ebook, you'll save hours writing headlines and triple your results… yes it really is that good. http://www.marketinggems.com/headlines.html
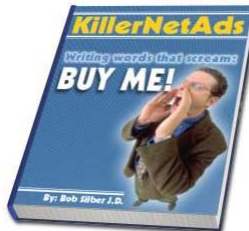
"Secrets To Creating Killer Net Ads That Sell" is a unique copywriting ebook. It doesn't go into headlines, offers and P.S.'s. Instead, this ebook shows you how to write words that compel your readers *psychologically*. It's one of my favorite copywriting resources. http://www.marketinggems.com/netads.html

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