

BEST DARN CONSULTING Co. PERIOD

The Writers Workshop

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If You Feel You Are Making All The Money Possible From Your Ads, Then This Report Is Not For You

It has been said that advertising costs the same whether it is used intelligently or foolishly. An ad in the newspaper costs you the same amount whether it generates one new customer or 100 new customers. A mailer costs you the same whether it brings in \$10 of business or \$10,000. Your degree of skill in marketing and advertising can obviously have a profound impact on your business.

Few Business Really Understand How To Advertise Intelligently

Small businesses must demand maximum performance from every marketing dollar spent. Ad campaigns that are cute and/or silly attempt only to build name recognition or merely say, "Here it is, come get it." These must be avoided.

Small businesses cannot afford to spend a lot of money on advertising where the main purpose is to build name recognition. Advertising must lead prospects to act in some measurable, specific way - send in a coupon, call a number, write a check, go to the store, etc. - all in an effort to make a sale.

Headlines

Simply stated, the headline is the ad for the ad. Its purpose is to pick people out of a crowd of readers/listeners who may be responsive to your general offer and give them a reason to continue reading or listening to the ad.

You want to always incorporate your prospects Hot Buttons into your headlines. Hot Buttons are the important and relevant concerns or issues a prospect has around your product or service. Hot Buttons help prospects identify the unique benefits they will receive by doing business with your firm, stated in an easily embraceable way. It's the one thing that really distinguishes you from your competition.

People who have an interest in your proposition will read the headline and keep reading. Those who aren't interested in your headline won't keep reading - but you shouldn't care because they aren't qualified prospects. If, however, you use a cute, ambiguous headline to attract attention, chances are you will lose people who *are* qualified. Remember: we're only interested in selling to qualified, interested prospects!

Being Specific

Claude Hopkins, the father of direct response advertising, said *"Platitudes and generalities roll off the human understanding like water off a duck's back. They leave no impression whatever."* To say "Low Prices, Biggest Selection or Highest Quality" is useless. People tend to be skeptical. They need to be convinced.

Instead, try using specific, graphically illustrative words and phrases that quantify your statement. **"We Always Have at Least 1745 Tuxedos in No Less Than 22 Different Styles, 72 Varying Sizes, and 10 Desirable Colors, And in Price Ranges From \$25 to \$125."** This is more definite and more believable than the usual generic "Large Selection."

Since people are skeptical, they tend to discount (or flat out ignore) any generalized statements you make. But they know that you wouldn't tell a bold-faced lie. When you make a specific statement about your product, they give it 100% credibility. Changing general statements to specific ones will double the effectiveness of any advertisement. And at No extra cost. Try it.

Long vs. Short Copy

Interesting short copy is better than boring long copy. But remember who you are trying to sell your products to: interested, qualified prospects - the people who are hungry for information about the product or service in question.

Think in terms of salesman-like advertising. You certainly wouldn't send a salesman to see an interested, qualified prospect and have him merely hand the prospect a photograph of your product and say, "Ours is higher quality and we have better service," and then leave. But that is exactly what 90% of all advertising does and says! If you don't believe us, just look in your local newspaper or yellow pages directory.

The More You Tell, The More You Sell

A Rule Of Thumb: Use as much space as it takes to present a fairly complete argument for your product or service. As an example, DAK consumer electronics earned hundreds of millions of dollars by describing in exacting, painstaking detail every feature, benefit, and advantage of what seemed to be very common products. You should've seen their 32-page mini-magazine that sold **one** product - a desktop publishing software package. Since a colleague of ours was an interested, qualified prospect, he read the entire magazine twice in one sitting and then placed an order.

W.I.I.F.M.

What's In It For Me? Every ad must address this important question. Surprisingly, most advertisements only breeze over WIIFM. They would rather tell you that they've been in business for 328 years or that they have 44 experts on site.

If this sounds familiar, that's because it is. Your unique selling position should tell people what's in it for them - and state that reason in clear, graphically illustrative terms. Here's another formula for you to remember when you're describing your products or services: FAB.

FAB stands for Features, Advantages, and Benefits. While most ads focus on features, the best ads focus on advantages and benefits.

Risk Reversal

In almost every business relationship, one party is always asking the other - whether implicitly or explicitly - to bear the burden of risk on the transaction.

If your product or service can truly perform, then you should not hesitate to offer it to interested, qualified prospects at zero risk. If your product cannot perform, or if you're trying to sell it to the wrong target, you have no business being in business. Don't make your prospect take the risk.

Marketing consulting is a perfect example of risk reversal. Even though most of our clients come to us on a referral basis, they don't really know if we can help them out in their situation. People hesitate to pay us in advance to write an advertisement if they've never worked with us before.

But since we know our services will exceed their expectations (we can't go wrong because we hedge by testing), we don't mind "giving" the service away. Depending on the relationship with

the client, we might or might not ask for a good faith deposit. But we never accept any money if something doesn't work.

Now, contrast that to our competition - advertising agencies. They demand payment in advance - and we guarantee that they will refuse to refund your money if their \$10,000 artwork didn't net you any new customers. They're funny that way.

Like everything else we exhort, always state your guarantee in readily embraceable terms. "Money Back Guarantee" does not evoke the same response as saying "Your check will not be cashed for two weeks and the sale isn't even considered binding until you've taken your diamond to be appraised by at least two certified gemologists of your choice."

Yes, you will have a higher incidence of returns if you offer a guarantee. You might even have a few people take advantage of you. But if emphasizing a performance guarantee doubles or triples the response of an ad, the returns are inconsequential. Again, the guarantee offers you an opportunity to increase your bottom line without spending extra money.

Chameleon Advertising

In many cases, it makes sense to disguise your advertisement. People tend to not pay attention to advertisements, but they do tend to pay attention to news or entertainment most advertisements are so often delivered with.

Paul Harvey tells the whole world "The Rest of the Story" three times a day. At least a couple of times a week, he starts one of his news stories by talking about the consumer satisfaction polls for new cars. Buick Park Avenue, the car Paul himself drives, is always on top. It sounds just like a news clip. It's an advertisement.

Some of the greatest print advertisements of all times looked just like news articles. One we like is frequently found in the sports section. The headline says, "**New, Hot Golf Ball Banned From Pro Tour - Flies Too Far.**" It keeps running year after year; it must be working.

Call to Action

Just like a good salesman always tries to close the deal, your advertisements should lead the prospect to do something. Your objective will determine what that action is. If you're generating leads, your ad needs to tell people to call, send a card, bring in a coupon, write for more information or some other specific reply. If you're trying to make sales, tell people to write a check or call with their credit card ready.

People are silently begging to be led. If your advertisement has built a solid case for your product, all you have to do is ask for action and you will get it.

In Conclusion

There are several other aspects of ad writing that haven't been covered here, like use of testimonials, bonuses, postscripts, and such. Unless your product is very simple to understand, it's a good idea to use advertising for lead generating. There comes a point when it makes sense to sub a real salesman to close the sale. But don't underestimate the usefulness of employing a huge army of tiny salesmen to open doors and pique interest. If your salesman-like ads are reaching qualified, interested prospects, they will definitely have a positive effect on your business.

If you are interested in learning more about how to write this kind of marketing, give us a call at 800.507.4856 or check out our MONOPOLIZE Your MARKETPLACE events and programs at www.bestdarnconsulting.com.