



COPY SERVICES

DIGITAL
COLOR
LEGAL
BLACK & WHITE
NEWSLETTERS
POSTCARDS
REPORTS
FLYERS

PRINTING SERVICES

BROCHURES
FORMS
LABELS
INVITATIONS
BUSINESS CARDS
PRESENTATION FOLDERS

MAILING SERVICES

ADDRESSING
INSERTING
POSTAGE DISCOUNTS

C&M can take your files on disk, via e-mail and FTP

www.cmprintmail.com
818-353-7135

SPRING 2008

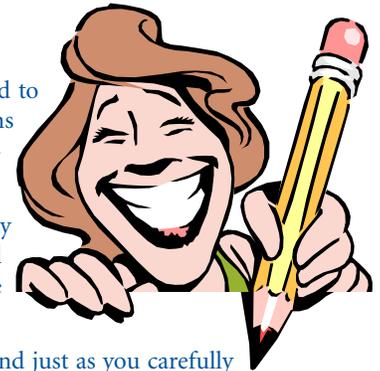
Buzz words

MARKETING COMMUNICATION SKILLS: WRITING THAT SELLS

The term *marketing communications* describes messages used to communicate with a market. Marketing communications focus on the products or services of a business or organization rather than on the company or organization itself.

Marketing communications is the content used to create a variety of sales collateral material – flyers and brochures, direct mail marketing packages, newsletters, press releases – and can also be used on company web pages.

Think of marketing communications as salesmanship in print. And just as you carefully prepare and plan for a sales call, prepare and plan for salesmanship in print.



WHO ARE YOUR POTENTIAL BUYERS?

Regardless of your business or industry, your potential buyers will fit into one of five categories:

- those who are dissatisfied with their current provider and are ready to switch now;
- those who are open to switching but haven't yet made the decision to do so;
- those who haven't yet thought about switching, but could be persuaded;
- those who are satisfied with their current provider and therefore are not now interested; and
- those who, for whatever reason, will never be interested.

Your task when writing marketing communications is to find a way to communicate effectively with potential buyers in the first four categories. In addition, the specific individuals within each buyer category can react differently to the sales message based on their need for lesser or greater amounts of information prior to making the decision to buy.

To guide your writing, remember the acronym AIDA – Attention, Interest, Desire, Action. This model, developed perhaps as early as 1898, describes the steps of a selling cycle:

- Attract the attention of the buyer
- Create interest in your product or service by demonstrating features, advantages and benefits
- Convince buyers that they want the product or service because it will satisfy their needs
- Tell buyers the next step to take to either purchase or lead to purchase.

ATTRACTING ATTENTION

The single most compelling way to attract the buyer's attention is to use a headline. In his 1985 book *Ogilvy on Advertising*, advertising legend David Ogilvy states, "On average, five times as many people read the headlines as read the body copy. It follows that unless your headline sells your product, you have wasted 90 per cent of your money."

Headlines that work best are those that promise a benefit or are newsworthy. They will answer the unspoken question of the reader: "What's in it for me? Why should I spend any more time on this?"

Compelling headlines incorporate powerful, action oriented words that appeal to the reader's emotion. Examples include *announcing*, *secrets*, *quick*, *proven*, *easy*, *at last* and *sale*. Most headlines will fit into one of several categories: *guarantee* (states a benefit, then guarantees it); *discount* (describes savings then

continued on page 3

Seeing is Bee-lieving! – QUALITY & VALUE... At C&M,

TEASER COPY & HEADLINES

When writing marketing communications, keep in mind that almost always you will be interrupting the reader who is engaged in some activity besides reading your sales material. For example, a direct mail marketing letter will come to your reader's attention while he or she is in the midst of opening the mail, or your reader will notice a display ad while reading a magazine article.

Tricks
& Tips



This fact amplifies the importance of an attention-getting device to distract the reader from whatever activity you have interrupted, and engage their interest in your message. On an envelope, the attention-getting device is called *teaser copy*; for a display ad or sales collateral material, it is often a headline.

Good teaser copy and headlines share the same characteristics: they catch the reader's attention and keep it long enough so that the first sentence is read. And if the first few sentences clearly delineate a benefit to the reader, he or she is likely to keep on reading, all the way to the offer and response.

Tips for writing strong teaser copy and headlines:

- **Be descriptive but brief** — Include enough to engage the reader's interest but not enough to tell the complete story.
- **Use action words** — Encourage your reader to do something.
- **Use a question** — Well written questions work because people are drawn to find out the answer. But if you pose a provocative question, be prepared to answer it within your sales message.

Some people object to using teaser copy because it identifies the mail piece as advertising mail. However, well-written teaser copy can increase response rate by creating desire to open the mail piece to see what's inside.

Tips for writing effective teaser copy:

- **Make sure the teaser relates to the offer.** Don't mislead the customer just to get them to look inside.
- **Think benefits with teaser copy.** No benefit, no reason for the audience to look inside.
- **Urge action.** A call to action should always be in your teasers, something like "Limited Offer."
- **Tie the teaser copy on the outside to what's on the inside.** Make sure it does. The audience will better understand what you are offering.
- **Ensure the graphics and copy work well together.** Make sure they complement the issue, not confuse it.
- **Give teaser copy a "YOU" attitude.** Explain what the customer will gain in his language. And don't speak at him or to him, but speak with him. ■



Buzzy's Corner

Q. *Is there a difference between writing marketing communications for business-to-business and business-to-consumer selling?*

A. The fundamentals – attention, interest, desire, action – remain the same. However, business-to-business copy differs from business-to-consumer copy because the underlying sales process is different.

Consumer purchases are almost always an individual or a family decision, where one member of the family is the principal decision maker. Marketing communications for consumers will take into account demographic information (such as age, occupation, gender, income, ethnicity) and psychographics (people's interests) to write copy designed to appeal to a specific, well-defined individual.

Business-to-business selling, on the other hand, often involves both information gatherers and decision makers. The decision-making process is typically more involved, and usually takes longer. It is possible that during the sales cycle, different versions of marketing communications will have to be created for the various business decision makers.

Q. *How can I write a memorable slogan or tag line?*

A. All good slogans or tag lines have several things in common that makes them stick in our minds. Keeping these in mind while you develop a slogan will increase the chances that you'll write a winner.

1. **Easy to remember.** A slogan succinctly captures a key concept, such as Nike's *Just Do It*.
2. **Clever use of language.** This includes a play on words, such as General Electric's *We bring good things to light* or Burger King's *Have It Your Way!*
3. **Emphasize a product benefit.** Mazda's *Zoom Zoom* depicts what it is like to experience driving their car.
4. **Elicit emotion.** A slogan that brings a smile to someone's face or even makes them chuckle creates a positive experience. ■

Buzzy

we will change the way you think about printing, copying & mailing.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS: WRITING THAT SELLS

continued from page 1

provides a reason to act); *benefit* (describes a benefit in which the reader is interested); and *how to* (a variation on the benefit headline; *describes faster, better, cheaper, easier.*)

CREATING INTEREST

Attracting the interest of a buyer is based on appealing to emotion – to wants, not needs. We all need a vehicle to get to work, but we want different kinds of vehicles. Therefore marketing communications need to address the buyer's wants.

Note that this is counterintuitive to the idea that a business is selling a product or service. There is a natural tendency for marketing communications to focus on the business offering the product or service – who the business is, what it does, its corporate philosophy and history, its mission statement and corporate objectives.

However, in the initial stages of marketing communication, the buyer is not interested in the company. Instead, the buyer continues to ask, "What's in it for me? How will I benefit from doing business with this company versus its competitors (including my current vendor)?" If you can devise a meaningful answer to this question, you will have developed *empathy* with your buyer.

CONVINCING THE BUYER

Only after attracting the buyer's attention and gaining his interest will you be ready to move on to convincing the buyer that your product or service is the right one to meet their needs and satisfy their wants. Present facts, statistics and other objective information that the buyer will notice and remember. Show the buyer how using your product or service will be of benefit. The features of your product demonstrate how it meets the buyer's needs, but it is how the features translate to benefits that show how it satisfies his wants.

To help translate features into benefits, make a list of features. Read the feature, then answer the question, "What this means to you is..." to develop the benefit. Keep in mind that benefits must be real and of importance to the buyer. This is another step in developing empathy with the buyer.

Finally, write as if you were having a face-to-face discussion with the buyer. Use *you* and *your* and rewrite sentences to change the emphasis from your company to the buyer. For example, "We provide world-class customer service" is focused on the selling company. To focus on the buyer, use "You deserve world-class customer service." The first sentence is a claim that the buyer may or may not believe; the second is a statement that the buyer is very likely to agree with.

TAKING ACTION

No matter how carefully you have written your marketing communications to attract attention, create interest and promote desire, if you don't motivate your buyer to take immediate action, your marketing communication has not fulfilled its purpose.

To motivate buyers to act now, you must provide a sense of urgency in the copy. Typically this is done with a limit – either time or availability. The first 50 respondents will receive . . . is an example of availability; offer expires on December 31 is an example of time. The shorter the time period or the smaller the quantity, the greater the sense of urgency that is created.

When coupled with a special offer, a sense of urgency should provoke a good response from your buyers. Some examples of special offers are a discount or credit toward purchase or something for free. Depending on who the target audience is, the special offer could be called introductory (targeting new customers) or appreciation (targeting current or past customers). Just be certain that the offer has true value for the buyer, or else it won't act as a motivator.

GENERATING TRUST AND CONFIDENCE

Strip away all the techniques for motivating prospects to respond and buy, and you will find a basis of trust and confidence between the buyer and seller. Both consumer and business buyers are now sophisticated and able to detect falsehood, hype, hyperbole and overstatement. Keep your marketing communications simple, factual and powerful and you will take the first step in convincing prospects to buy from you. ■

IDEA GOOD WRITING BEGINS WITH AN IDEA

CORNER

No matter what your writing assignment – newsletter copy, brochure, display ad, sales presentation, direct marketing letter or technical literature – good writing begins with an idea. And a great source of ideas is a swipe file – a collection of items that you find interesting or eye catching such as:

- creative, attention-getting ads
- competitors printed materials
- great promotional ideas
- reference or resource list
- paper samples
- graphics and cartoons

A swipe file provides a concrete illustration of what works and what doesn't, of what you prefer and what you don't. It helps you understand the possibilities, and offers practical instruction of how the rules are used. By mimicking what has been successful, you'll develop your own style more quickly.

Do remember, though, that a swipe file is meant to be a source of inspiration, not examples to be plagiarized. The goal is not to copy successful work, but to adapt it to your writing. ■



Your Copy & Print Center

818-353-7135

www.cmprintmail.com

TOLL FREE (866) 500-7009

FAX (818) 353-8135

TOLL FREE FAX (866) 500-7946

C&M PRINTING COPYING MAILING

10034 Commerce Ave.

Tujunga, CA 91042

PRESORT STANDARD
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #7
PASADENA, CA



Cresenta Valley Chamber of Commerce
Glendale Chamber of Commerce
Sunland-Tujunga Chamber of Commerce



National Association of Women Business Owners
LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

Promote your business with Quality Printing, Copying & Mailing

Writing Great Headlines

Because a good headline eliminates unnecessary words and focuses on one compelling idea, the rules of grammar and punctuation as applied to headlines are designed to promote reader comprehension. Here are some guidelines:

- *Use active voice.* In grammar, voice is the relationship between the verb and the nouns associated with it (called the *subject* or the *object* of the verb). There are two voices in English – active and passive. Active voice, in which the subject of the sentence performs the action, is preferred for headlines because it is clearer and more succinct than passive voice.

It is easy to recognize passive voice because the verb phrase will include a form of *to be* (such as *am, is, was, were, are, or been.*) To change from passive to active voice, locate who or what is performing the action expressed by the verb. Make that the subject of the sentence, and change the verb accordingly.

- *Passive voice:* Our product is ordered by four out of five people who receive this brochure.
- *Change to active voice:* Four out of five people who receive this brochure order our product.
- *Use present tense.* Tense is the indication of the time at which the event described by the sentence occurred. In English this is

a property of the verb and may be either past, present, or future. In headlines, use present tense for immediate past events; past tense for more distant events, and future tense for coming events.

- *Use numerals.* Unlike text, numbers are allowed at the beginning of a headline and do not have to be spelled out if below 10. An exception is the number *one*.
- *Use a comma in place of the word “and”.* In addition to its normal use, a comma may be used in place of and in a headline.
Example: GM, Chrysler Open Talks
- *Use short words.* Find a short synonym for a long word. For example, panel or group is better in a headline than committee. And remember that adjectives are usually not needed. ■

