

Double your sales from

***Brochures
Adverts
Flyers
Eshots***

A master class with

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Organised by Business Link Yorkshire



1. Win more from your promotions

Most sales promotions professionals acknowledge that as much as 50%, if not more, of the money they spend for their clients is wasted.

Their dilemma is that until their advertising, mailing or sales brochures are actually published, it's all but impossible to say which will succeed and which will fail. And by the time they find out, the money is spent and sales are won or lost. Help is at hand, however.

The right approach

Sales promotion is exactly what it says: a way to promote an increase in sales - to encourage more people to buy from you. All too often, however, it is used, ineffectually, as a means to build corporate prestige, create awareness or simply let people know what you are doing. (Unless, of course, that's all you want to do!)

There is also a British attitude which sometimes inhibits us from promoting ourselves enthusiastically. We prefer to explain our product or service modestly, invite customers to consider what we offer, and then, hopefully, to buy. It is not an ethic guaranteed to bring sales success.

Make no mistake, there is no substitute for enthusiasm in your sales and marketing promotions. If you're not enthusiastic about your product/service then don't expect your customers to be enthusiastic either.

The principles of effective promotion

The basic principles of good sales promotion are, in reality, quite simple.

- You must talk to customers, in their own language, about things that interest them. You must tell them how you enable them to achieve what they want; relieve pain, have clear skin or reduce cost in their production line.
- The focus of everything that you communicate in your advertising, mailings, brochures and internet marketing must switch from the products/services you sell to the ways that your customers benefit or gain.

It's all completely logical. It works amazingly well. Yet it's surprising how few people in promotions and advertising follow this simple approach.

In fact, most businesses promote and sell their 'products' or 'services'. But it's well known that customers actually buy what these products or services will do for them. This is not just a matter of selling 'benefits'. It's a much bigger concept. Indeed, correctly

applied, it's a concept that will change the entire focus of your business - and enable you to target customers who are the best, most profitable match to what you sell.

Identify profitable customers

Not everyone will buy what you sell. A Mercedes car, for example, is bought by certain types of customers. Ideally, you should target your promotions at these. The difficulty, of course, is finding them.

If you target everyone, you may catch all those who can buy - but it will cost you a lot of money. If you narrow your promotions to a select few, you'll save money - but you could miss many potential customers. And there are further problems along the way, too.

Valued, profitable customers are difficult to win. Bad customers are much easier. The logic is simple: The best customers are happy with their present suppliers or with what they've purchased before. They repeat buy, and from their favoured supplier. They're not tempted by another supplier's promotional and selling activities.

Bad customers, on the other hand, the one's that shop around, demand more and pay less, respond eagerly to your promotions activities. And that's bad news!

Precise targeting is therefore very important - and the way you promote your product or service plays a vital role. Remember, targeting is not just about winning more business, it's about winning profitable business.

Only the best 20% of all prospective customers are very profitable. Profitability then declines - until the worst 20% make you a loss. If you serve mostly profitable customers today, then increasing market share can easily pick up less profitable customers, and reduce your overall profitability. Conversely, if the customers you serve today are poor quality then, with careful targeting, an increase in market share can increase your profit.

Of course, when you concentrate on winning the best 20% of customers - the most profitable for your business - you may address smaller numbers of customers. However, if you're a small firm, you don't need that many new customers, so why not concentrate on winning the best. They may be harder to win but in the long term they stay loyal and make lots more money.

During the seminar you learn how to target your sales promotions to win good customers and avoid the nightmares from hell!

2. The right approach

How to win the prospect's attention

The average advertisement, brochure or mailer loses its readers attention at every sentence end, paragraph break and column change. So much so that for every one hundred people who are attracted by a headline, ninety percent or more may give up at one point or another while reading the main message.

Of course, not all readers are interested in what you have to sell. Many will realise that it is not for them. But those who are interested must be kept riveted to the page by every means possible, until they are convinced to purchase.

"We are not here to sell off a parcel of vats and boilers; but to offer the potentiality of wealth beyond the dreams of avarice."

Dr. Johnson's words to rival bidders before he auctioned off his late uncle's brewery equipment. The message: make sure the customer can visualise the personal outcome they will achieve.

The message before pictures

The message is the most important part of any promotional communication. Pictures take second place. This may go against the grain for many professionals who like to focus attention on the big picture, but remember, people buy your product/service because it will do something for them, not because of what it looks like - yes, even when you're buying clothes!

Of course, appearance can be important. It may be the main reason you derive benefit; when you buy attractive clothes, for example. You want to look attractive, to fit in with your peer group or flaunt your wealth.

That's why advertisers show clothes on attractive models or celebrities that we aspire to be like. Perfume advertisers take a similar approach. In this form of advertising the viewer is asked to interpret an implied message. There may be few words, but the message is implied, and it's very clear. That may work for clothes and perfume, but with business to business promotions you have to take a more direct message approach.

What it does for the customer

How would you sell a 'Word for Windows' training course? Most training organisations advertise the course content; 'This is what you will learn'. They expect prospective customers to understand why they should

attend. Most prospective customers, unfortunately, don't or can't be bothered to work that out for themselves. As a result, in a world, where over 90% of heavy users acknowledge that their lack of 'Word' skills costs them valuable time and money, less than 3% attend training.

A picture of your training facility and a list of course features do not give people a reason to buy. You must change the focus of your sales promotions to what potential customers will achieve, the positive outcomes they can expect to derive.

Now imagine you are targeting parents with children's educational software that runs on a personal computer. A lot of parents are not convinced that computer learning is a good thing? Many consider it as a poor substitute for conventional teaching methods. If you advertise a picture of your software and describe the contents, few will be convinced.

Now add a headline,

"In just six weeks 'English for Kids' put Jane at the top of her class"

and change the main picture to Jane and her mum interacting with the training programme on screen and enjoying the learning experience. (You can add a smaller picture of the software product.)

The headline now infers a powerful outcome for all parent. The picture/headline combination grabs attention. Few can resist reading on in the hope that their child will achieve the same. Your main copy goes on to talk about how your software makes it easy and interesting for children to learn. Include examples of what the child learns and how this fits into the school curriculum. Now add testimonials to give evidence that it does improve a child's grades at school. A sales winning combination.

Deciding what to say

Your promotional media must communicate all the important ways a customer benefits; the outcomes they derive from buying or using your product/service. You must entice, cajole, convince and reward. You must be concise, clearly understood, and not waver from what is important to the customer.

First, however, you must decide which groups of customers to target and the messages that will encourage them to buy. Your task then is to translate the reasons why they will buy into effective words, pictures and layouts.

3. The AIDCA formula

Professional copywriters use the AIDCA formula every day so it is not a beginners tool. As a general rule you should include every element of the formula.

On occasions, however, elements of the formula may be missed out - for example when there is not enough time to tell the whole story, such as with a poster.

Here a "desire" headline and an "action" call may be all that you can include.

ATTENTION

"Promise, much promise is the soul of an advertisement" Dr. Johnson, writer and wit.
(Eighteenth Century)

The headline is often the hardest thing to get right. For that reason, many copywriters leave writing it till last.

But don't worry, a powerful headline can often be found in the main body of the text, after all the writing is finished. Many a winning headline has been discovered in this way. Find a compelling phrase or sentence then rewrite it.

Combine a picture with the headline. But remember, it is the words that encourage readers to read on.

The picture is a supporting element, to draw attention to, and to reinforce the message.

- Headlines should ideally be one of two types: 'Benefit' or 'Outcome' related headlines are always the best, particularly if they tell a mini story.
- 'News' headlines, about what your product/service has done for a previous customer, are second best. Don't use 'Three Witty Word' headlines to stop readers in their tracks. They rarely work. Also avoid clever curiosity headlines as well. More often than not they backfire and the readers walk away.

INTEREST

In the interest generating stage of your promotions message you tell your main product/service story. You apply one of three story approaches, comparative, situation or simple benefits/outcomes.

Keep your mind focused at all times on how your product/service delivers the primary, secondary and tertiary needs and outcomes of your target customers.

DESIRE

Write about the product/service 'achieving outcomes' for the customer. Be genuinely enthusiastic. If you're not enthusiastic how can you expect the customer to be? And if the product or service works well, say so. The objective of this section of the message is to convince the reader that they really will benefit and gain.

But do bear in mind that many customers find it hard to translate features into benefits and outcomes. If a food mixing machine creates a light cake mixture, then write about it making deliciously light, mouth watering sponge cakes, and show a slice of the cake.

If a car is very economical then write about how much money they save and how that buys an extra holiday!

If your packaging helps to keep a drink in perfect condition to the very last drop then write about how little they waste, how long it can be stored for and how they will enjoy the full flavour to the very last drop.

CONVICTION

People are naturally suspicious. (Try giving £5 notes away on a street corner!) Unless you are a household name company, or customers have done business with you before, they'll have little reason to trust you.

So always give prospects a good reason for believing what you say. And never make claims that appear false. You must give the readers positive proof that what you say is true, that any claims you make about your product/service are genuine.

Use statistics that support your claims. Quote numbers, use graphs and employ a healthy dose of logic statements to make sure they see the full benefit, "...our lower washing temperature uses less electricity and saves you money." If a notable customer has praised your product/service ask them for an endorsement. Also, if you sell to leading companies, say so.

ACTION

Always be sure to tell prospective customers what action you want them to take. Try to include a benefit to encourage immediate action.

'Complete the reply paid card and post it today. You don't need a stamp.'

'Send for our full colour catalogue. It's FREE, there is no obligation to buy.'

'Telephone for an appointment now and discover how to earn far more from your savings.'

4. Layout

RULE 1 Put things where readers expect to find them

RULE 2 Make it very easy to read the text.

Over the years there have been many experiments to determine the most effective layouts.

As you might expect, there are no absolute rules, however, the way in which people view a page or screen remains reasonably consistent. Many believe the first area people scan is the top of the page, where a heading logically sits. But camera eye tests show this is not true.

Tests on alternative layouts using identical copy have shown that response to advertisements and mailers substantially improves when the headline is placed in the second quarter down. As we know, a good benefit or outcome related headline has a very short time in which to work. If your headline isn't where readers first look then you may not catch their attention.

Front page picture

Some believe that pictures are better than words at capturing the readers attention and place a picture in the prime position in the second quarter down.

They then place the headline or caption at the top of the page, above the picture. This allows them to arrange all the elements in a top down order. However, pictures do not communicate benefits or outcomes effectively and few pictures enticing a prospect to read.

Place your picture at the top, above the headline, where it reinforces the product story after the main benefit has been absorbed. Tests show that response to an ad or mailer can reduce by as much as 50% if the main benefit headline is lost at the top of the page!

Advertisements

People look at adverts, mailers, brochures, eshots and web pages in a similar way. The key issue is the time in which you have to win the readers attention and induce them to read on.

If you use a product picture, your company name and a product description, you will only catch readers who like to read ads or who are currently looking for what you sell. These, as we know, are few and far between.

Typical viewing order

3

Picture

1

Attention winning message - Headline

2

Interest - What you sell
Desire - How they gain

4

Conviction - Why it's true
Action - What to do next

With most readers, you must stop them dead in their tracks with a powerful 'What's in it for me' benefit headline, otherwise they will not stop to read at all.

This is particularly important for ads in directories such as Yellow Pages and magazines where you share a page with many other advertisers.

Brochures

Don't include too many features and benefits.

As prospective customers read on they learn more and more about less important aspects - often of no direct benefit to them. This can damage the sale - just like salespeople who don't know when to stop talking.

A good brochure has a concise selling story that focuses only on the two or three most important customer benefits or outcomes. If you must include all your features then list them on the back page.

Try to presents the best of your sales story in one continuous run. It can be confined just to one side or run on to several pages. And don't forget the call to action!

Some additional tips

White space

Leave plenty of “white space” between elements on the page or on screen so that what you write has room to be seen. It's just like talking; if you don't leave any gaps between your sentences others find it difficult to understand what you say. Also leave extra “white space” around the edges of important elements like headlines, so they stand out.

Consistent appearance

Don't keep changing your ads or literature just for the sake of it! A consistent appearance builds recognition

Interesting layouts

In general, busy layouts attract more attention than simple ones. It keeps interest alive. But be careful not to overcrowd the page or nothing is communicated. This does not apply to the main and secondary front page messages which must always be clear and easy to read.

Pictures and illustrations

Pictures can increase the response from promotional literature by as much as 50%, but it depends on their relevance to the story. Details of important product features should be shown in close up and have effective outcome related captioning to reinforce the picture.

- If possible, try to make a picture an action shot. A product being used or a service being carried out.
- One large picture is better than two small ones unless you are demonstrating an action sequence.
- Graphs, charts and diagrams sell when they demonstrate customer benefits or outcomes.
- Cartoons draw attention but don't use them as a gimmicks. If a photo works better, use that. Photos are real, drawings are not real and not believed!
- Before and after pictures always seem to attract a lot of interest. (Slimming aids, soap powders, etc.)
- Positive reward pictures are better than negative ones (except in drug and some health adverts).
- If you feel that you need a prestigious glossy brochure, then make sure the front page shouts your strongest customer benefit message. The message is then carried into the following text or onto the first inside page with a strong ‘interest’ and ‘desire’ stories.

A few points on creative and advertising agencies

Many believe that good promotional copy writing is all about writing skills—having a way with words. That's why they prefer to pass the whole job to a professional. Unfortunately, not all professionals understand the principles of persuasive communication. Some focus on the design and pictures and you get an attractive advert, brochure or mailer, but few sales.

Don't leave everything to an agency or you may end up with promotional material which concentrates on your product/service but does little to motivate the average prospect to respond or buy. A good advertising agency will develop the 'offer' or 'benefits' message first and then uses design, as a tool, to give the message impact and encourage reading.

So if you use an agency, make sure that you retain control of the message. You can even develop the selling message yourself and then get the agency to copywrite the content and incorporate it into a pleasing design. This makes sense because:-

- You (and your close colleagues) have lived with your markets and products or services for many years.
- You understand your customers' needs and the reasons they will buy.
- You understand how different customers benefit from using your product or service.

At the end of the day you may be surprised to find that successful promotional copy has less to do with design and more to do with making the customer understand why they should buy, and buy from you.

Direct mail and email shots

The average person receives a large number of mailers and emails so it is important to **grab** the prospects attention the moment it leaves the envelope or hits the computer screen. Remember, you have about two seconds to stop it hitting the bin!

Hit their primary need with your best benefit or outcome on the front page or subject line. No clever words, no double meanings, no ‘thinking’ required. A simple, unambiguous message that tells the customer exactly how they benefit. Underneath, write ‘interest’ and ‘desire’ raising secondary statements that makes them want to find out more - to read. Then press for action.

Make the response section or reply card work as an independent mini-mailer. Incorporate ‘desire’ and ‘action’ elements to encourage action.

5. Type and typefaces

• There are two basic type styles, Serif and Sans-Serif. Serif typefaces are generally used for reading texts. They have a horizontal emphasis that assists reading.

Sans Serif typefaces are designed for display work and difficult reading conditions. They have a strong, vertical, clean cut appearance which is better suited to short headlines, posters and captions.

If you use a Sans-Serif typeface for body copy text you reduce readability and people stop reading! Try to keep to no more than one Serif and one Sans-Serif typeface per document. If you use too many typefaces it makes the design look messy and cheap.

Only use 'Times New Roman' for narrow column work, like newspapers and magazines.

Do not use italic for long texts

Italic text is difficult to read for long periods. It may look classy and it may stand out because it looks different, but it can reduce readability by up to 50%.

Do not use italic for emphasis.

*Italic text is often lighter than ordinary Roman text. If you want to emphasise a block of text **use bold** or increase the type size. Use italic text for short notes and captions.*

Avoid underlining

Underlined text is a hangover from our school days.
It is difficult to read.

There are better ways to emphasise; **try using Bold.**

How many heading layers

Do not use more than two levels of headings or sub-headings unless it is absolutely necessary. Multiple layers of headings confuse the reader.

Headlines

Keep to one typeface for all your headings and sub-heads. Nothing looks worse than different typefaces, used inconsistently, on the same page or in the same brochure.

Headings can either be in a Sans-Serif typeface, which is strong and has maximum impact, or alternatively in a serif typeface which is, perhaps, a little more elegant.

Use 'ALL CAPITALS' only for very short headings or subheadings. With longer headings 'all capitals' are very difficult to read quickly.

Serif typefaces

'Book' reading typefaces are always best for copy and general text work.

Examples of publishers' book typefaces:

- This reading typeface is Garamond
- This reading typeface is Caslon Regular
- This reading typeface is Palatino
- This reading typeface is Century New Style
- This reading typeface is Century Schoolbook
- This typeface is Bookman Old Style

Sans Serif typefaces

Good for short headings, display work, presentations and websites etc.

Examples of Sans Serif display typefaces:

- This display typeface is Arial
- This display typeface is AvantGuard
- This display typeface is Gill Sans

Type size

Not too large - it can be difficult for everyone to read.

This is 15 point type.

This is about right for slightly older readers.

This is 12 point type

This is about right for younger readers.

This is 11 point type

Not too small - it can be very difficult for older readers.

This is 8 point type

6. Promotional methods

Some media are broad in their reach. The shotgun approach. Newspapers, posters, television and radio advertising for example. At the other end of the scale, you rifle shoot and target prospects individually or as a select group with direct mail, email and telemarketing. There are two important things you should consider:

Reaching prospective buyers

A direct approach, using direct mail, tele-sales and emarketing, is effective but only if you have a first class prospect list. Direct methods of promotion are expensive per contact, so you should limit your contact list only to those most likely to buy. A poor list increases your cost of sale dramatically so don't be tempted to buy or use a cheap list. It is the most expensive mistake you can make.

Advertising in publications is a shotgun approach. The readership may contain potential customers, or not. So before you advertise, evaluate how many potential customers read the publication. Don't believe the publishers' figures, do your own checking. The simplest, and the most effective way to do this, is to ask your existing customer what publications they regularly read. Many prospective customers may also read the same.

Generate a viable response

Every media has a different response rate. Direct methods have the greatest response. Magazines associated with trade bodies also do well - they have credibility which rubs off on the advertisements. Magazines, which people pay good money to buy, are well read too.

Free magazines and newspapers, on the other hand, are only partially read. Many are thrown in the bin without being read at all. They may be cheap and attractive to advertisers but, because they are not read by many, the cost per sale can be high.

Page ten onwards explores the different ways that you can promote your sales. Some may at first glance appear inappropriate for your business. However, it's worth thinking about all the different methods - and not just picking those that you have always used in the past.

Companies spend vast amounts of money on advertising in the press and in trade and general

magazines. Most claim that they advertise to win sales. But at the same time, few customers admit to reading adverts. So you might wonder why so much press advertising goes on. Here's why.

Large companies, with large advertising budgets, need to build and maintain their brand position, their public image and general product awareness. It costs a lot of money, money smaller firms can't afford. If you're a small or medium sized business think twice before indulging in these costly exercises. Concentrate instead on generating sales directly from your promotions spend.

Selling through wholesalers and retailers

Companies that sell products through wholesalers and retailers advertise for a variety of reasons. They may need to attract new customers and let them know where they can buy. They may want to encourage customers to buy their products instead of a competitors'. And they may also want to encourage potential distributors and retailers to stock their products. The very existence of an advertising campaign suggests that there will be consumer demand. (If a distributor doesn't stock your product then their customers may go elsewhere.)

When you run an advertising campaign to support products through a distribution chain, it is helpful to know that your promotional activities actually do trigger sales. Otherwise you may be throwing good money after bad. Fortunately, there are well-tested ways to tell if your advertising works.

A special offer coupon in an advertisement or mailer, coded to identify the publication, is a very effective way to gain information. The reader cuts it out and takes it to the shop. It tells you who read your adverts, which publication and in which areas.

It does not, however, reveal how many new customers were directly encouraged to buy as a result of the ad. Many people may already have decided to purchase - and were simply taking advantage of your generous offer. Nevertheless, it does tell you how many of potential customers read each publication or respond to a mailer or emarketing.

Business to Business promotions

When a business sells its products or services direct to other businesses, then the promotional activity usually asks for a direct response by mail (Coupon), email or phone. Most of the advertising in specialist business magazines or newspapers works in this way.

Responses by mail and email are easy to link to a direct promotional campaign. Telephone responses, however, can be more difficult to link. What should be a simple task of asking all callers where they found out about you is defeated when many of your day-to-day callers are repeat customers. They quickly get fed up with being asked where they found out about you.

If this presents a difficulty, then train your staff to ask callers, 'Are you an account customer.' or 'Are you an existing customer'. The implication is that they will be treated as special customers. No one can object to this. Those that say they haven't ordered before are then asked simply: "May I ask where you first heard about us?". (It's surprising how few businesses do this when it's so simple and so valuable.) By analysing the response from different media you can maximise your advertising spend.

Different ways to promote sales

There are two important factors to consider when you choose how to promote your products/services; the amount you want to spend and how difficult it is to identify and reach your target customers.

It's natural to want to spend as little as possible on promotion. But the cruel dilemma is that the less you spend, the less you sell - and the less money you make. In fact, during recessions the promotions budget is often the first thing to be cut. Research, carried out by the advertising industry, clearly shows that companies that cut promotional spend during a recession have lost both business and market share when the market returns. Those who keep up their promotional spend maintain market presence and actually increase market share.

Cost per sale

Spending money on promotions is one thing.

Spending

it wisely is quite another.

Do you know exactly how many enquiries you received last year from your Yellow Pages entry? Or the exact value of orders you won from your last advertisement, mail shot or emarketing campaign, after one month, two months and six months?

So here's another golden rule of sales promotion: make sure that you know the return you make from each promotions activity.

Furthermore, you must always measure the cost per sale and not the cost of the promotions method. For example:

- An exhibition generates 20 sales. The cost of exhibiting is £2,000. The cost per sale is £100
- Email shot to 10,000 potential customers generates 10 orders. The cost of the email is £1,000. The cost per sale is £100.
- A local press advert generates 20 sales. The cost of the advertisement is £1,000. The cost per sale is £50.
- Tele-sales to 400 potential customers generates 20 new sales. The cost of the tele-sales activity is £600. The cost per sale is £30.

From this analysis you would question why you attended the exhibition. You are better off spending more on tele-sales.

Another important factor in cost of sale is the skill of your sales staff in converting interest into orders. Less skilful sales people are paid less, sell less and cost far more per sale. Skilled sales people are paid more, sell more and often cost far less per sale.

Sales training is an essential way to increase the skill level of sales staff. Training for in-bound tele-sales staff and office sales is also very cost effective.

7. Advertising

To find out which publications relate to your target market get a copy of BRAD (the 'British Rate and Data' reference book. You can also research online.) It is expensive so you may find it more cost effective to simply ask your existing customers.

Which publications do they take home to read? How thoroughly do they read them? Ask them which they look forward to receiving, and which ones they pay for. Which they use for reference when they need to find suppliers? Look to see which they keep - and which they leave in their reception area for visitors to read (these are often the ones no one else wants). Then simply look up the publisher's contact information on the web.

Contact each publication and ask for a Media Pack. This details their editorial objectives, costs and any special features they might run during the year. It should also give an accredited breakdown of its readership by numbers and type. Ask your Chamber of Commerce for details of regional business publications. They should have a list of regional and local publications that serve the local business community.

More about business publications

There is a constant turnover of magazine titles, especially in the business sector. Most new publications are commercial and exist by generating revenue from advertising. A few are run by trade associations for their members and rely on subscriptions for their revenue.

Commercial publications need to demonstrate a worthwhile readership in order to attract advertising revenue. Some achieve this by free distribution. Even paid-for publications send out free issues to key groups of readers customers to make their magazine more attractiveness to advertisers. But many free publications are not read. They pile up in in-trays or go straight into the bin without ever being opened.

Getting the best from the media

When you place an advertisement, always ask for the page and position that will work best for you. The most-read pages in any trade publications contain editorials and feature articles. If your ad is placed adjacent to these it will greatly increase your response.

Avoid general advertising pages that have no editorial unless they're specially classified for products or services and you know that customers refer to them. As a general rule, try to get on an outside edge and avoid the

gutter. (Inside bound edge). Also, try for the right hand pages rather than the left.

Reply coupons should always go on an outside edge, preferably at the bottom of the page. Do not accept an inside position - it reduces response. No one likes to cut up the insides of pages. Also, avoid using a cutout reply coupon in magazines that you know customers like to keep for future reference.

Always ask for a page that relates to your product or service. i.e. property pages for housing services, gardening pages for garden products, sports pages for sports products. And always ask if they are planning any special features that link to your product or service.

If you advertise regularly, book the same spot each time and use an immediately recognisable style or design. This builds recognition and response. Do not keep changing your ad. Tests prove that consistency builds higher sales. If you worry that your repeated ads will bore customers, take note of adverts placed by market leaders. Many are repeated, unchanged for years; some for decades without a drop in sales response. Familiarity breeds sales.

Negotiate everything, yes everything!

Remember, with most publications everything is negotiable. Even the best magazines and newspapers will haggle if they have unsold space.

A first time advertiser can negotiate a good position because the publication wants to win your business. If you're a valued regular advertiser, on the other hand, the publication doesn't want to lose your business.

Some trade magazines have an enquiry card which readers tick for further information. If you're a new advertiser, try to negotiate a rate based on the response you achieve. It takes the risk out of trying new magazines.

Regular advertiser can often pick up space at a bargain price. Just let the publication know that you're interested in last minute cancelled space. But you must have artwork ready to run - preferably lodged with the magazine. You may be called more often than you think and the rates will often be at a giveaway price.

If you're planning an annual campaign, you could run a core campaign, say once every two months, and keep half your money back for cancelled space. You may well end the year with two or three times the exposure for the same promotional spend.

8. Direct marketing

Direct mail and emarketing can be a very cost-effective way to sell, but two things are essential:

1. You can design the best advert or eshot in the world but if you send it to the wrong people, you'll get little or no response. Your lists must target the right prospects accurately. This is the most common mistake promotions people make. So avoid the temptation to buy cheap or unproven lists and avoid mailing fringe customer groups that are unlikely to buy.
2. Your advert must be packed with relevant customer benefits and give prospective customers every reason to buy. Focus on the outcomes they want to achieve.

Mail lists

Mailing lists can be obtained from recognised list owners and brokers. "List Owners" own and update lists. "List Brokers" find and construct lists to match your needs.

Lists can be constructed by geography, business category, turnover, employees, named directors or managers, job title etc. Many lists are rented only and your mailing must be carried out by the owner or a registered mailing house. Be aware that many lists are seeded with extra addresses to check for repeat usage.

Watch out for...

If a list is cheap, then it's probably of dubious value or out of date. Always check when the list was last cleaned or updated (invalid names and duplications removed). Ask for the names of other advertisers that have used the list and do check the results they got.

When you buy a list there is always a temptation to add in extra categories or segments outside of your core markets to increase the overall response. This is bad practice. It reduces the average response rate and increases the cost-per-reply.

It pays to use approved list suppliers. Check out the Direct Mail Association. Web: www.dma.org.uk. Their site has lots of useful tips and legal compliance information.

Response methods

Postal reply: Use a 'Freepost' address if possible.

Telephone response: Make sure that your sales or tele-sales people know about any special offers on the mailer. A separate, free phone response number is a good idea to evaluate effectiveness.

9. Commercial radio

Local commercial radio tends to attract a mainly female, younger and slightly down market audience. If your products or services address these people, then radio can be a very cost effective promotional medium.

National commercial radio addresses a specialist audience. Classic FM, for example, mainly addresses mature, wealthier, up-market customers.

Before you decide to use a radio station, obtain a listener profile. This will tell you if a sufficiently large proportion of listeners are your potential customers.

The audience profile, however, won't tell you whether the listeners will actually buy, so ask the radio station for some case histories of others in your line of business.

If the station is unable to provide any case histories, it's for one of two reasons. No-one has tried advertising your product or service on their station before - in which case you're the guinea pig. Or someone has tried before - and failed. Always ask the radio station for a list of customer references. And do speak to them and check - remember, it's your money you are risking.

Things to look out for

Select the best time of day for your product or service. Try to catch people on the way to and from work, preparing for work, preparing evening meals, before weekend shopping or outings. You may have to pay a premium rate for these times but the response will be much higher.

Also, check their geographic coverage. You don't want to waste time and money selling to people who are too far away to visit you and buy

Putting your radio message together

It is in the radio station's own interest to make sure your advert works. Most stations offer an attractive package which includes production, professional presenters and lots of useful help and advice. Always remember, however, that customers are attracted by what a product or service will do for them so make sure that your radio message promises listeners something they really want. If you sell gas fires talk about how welcoming they are in winter and how nice it is to toast your toes.

Regular advertising should maintain a consistent message and build product/service recognition to encourage reluctant listeners to action. Repetition pays!

10. Events and seminars

Don't expect customers to turn up simply because you invite them and offer them some food. You need to offer a strong incentive or an exciting venue or entertainment to get senior decision makers to attend a corporate event or seminar. Events can also be expensive, so make sure they are cost effective and they win you new or repeat sales.

Considerations

Organise your events so that your sales people get one-on-one selling time with decision makers. One large IT company hired the Orient Express to take 100 IT directors of blue chip companies to the races - a five hour round train trip with nothing to do except talk business. 100 invitations hooked 99 IT directors and a £12M increase in their order book.

CAUTION - If you can't guarantee a reasonable response you can be seriously embarrassed.

11. Posters

Posters are considered the preserve of large companies that advertise nationally. This is not necessarily the case. There are many situations when posters can be used to great success by small, local businesses.

If your business depends on people coming to you to buy, small poster sites are an effective way to tell them who you are, what you sell and where you are. There are many small poster sites in the high street that do this effectively. If your business is located near a particular poster site, you can guide potential customers straight to your door.

If you target business executives or working people, then local railway and bus stations have excellent poster sites. Passengers wait for long periods and a good read is always welcome, so posters are read often and for long periods - long enough for you to put across a really good sales story. And don't forget that buses, trains and trams also have posters inside.

If you're interested in a particular poster site you'll generally find the poster company's name at the bottom of the frame. For buses or railway stations, call the operating company and they'll provide you with a contact.

If you cannot find the name of a site operator contact: The Outdoor Advertising Association of Great Britain Ltd. (www.oaa.org.uk)

12. Press release

Most commercial publications and newspapers receive 100 times more press releases than they can print.

Editors choose press releases solely for their value to the magazine. Their heavy advertisers go to the top of the pile - naturally. After that, the choice is based on how much interest readers may have in your particular story.

Remember, what may seem very exciting to you and your colleagues may be a complete bore to others. If the publication's editor is not convinced that their readers will be interested then your press release WILL be binned.

Before you bother to write a press release, ask yourself if one of the following is true:-

1. Will readers be interested to read what I say?
2. Will they benefit or gain in one way or another?
3. Will they be entertained or amused?
4. Does my press release have human warmth or concern - will the readers be emotionally moved?

Also, ask yourself what is so special or different about the story you have to tell. What compelling reason is there for the editor to include your story?

Layout

Editors are busy people and don't have the time to re-write your press release, so make sure you structure it correctly. A professional appearance will also help it get to the top of the pile, but every element must be in its right place.

If you're not confident in your writing skills then it pays to use a professional writer or PR company, one used to writing for press releases. They may also know many editors personally.

A professional press release layout is shown on the opposite page.

News release

Therma Building Products Ltd

Exact date

Therma Building Products Ltd
40 The Mall,
NORTHAMPTON
NN1 3AB

Reference number

Tel: 0604 123456
Fax: 0604 345678

(Even if you only ever do one
press release).

No 34

1st July 1992

Heading that says what it is
about, together with the
benefit.

New Thermatex brick improves heat insulation by 30%

The new Thermatex insulation brick, that gives 30% higher heat retention, is now available from all major builders merchants.

Explain what it does or is
and when it all happens.
Remember, this may be the
only bit that gets printed so
make it a complete story on
its own.

The brick is made by compressing ceramic insulation and aerated clay using a new high temperature process. This forms a lightweight composition that has the same high load-bearing characteristics of traditional brick with a high tolerance to water saturation.

Build belief.

The new Thermatex brick has been approved by the Housebuilding Research Establishment and conforms to BS 1234.

Use quotes when
appropriate.

Mr. Richard Knight, Managing Director of Therma Building Products Ltd., says: "The new brick costs around 5% more than conventional stock but allows significant savings to be made on insulation materials. The average householder is also estimated to save between £150 and £200 each year on their heating bills. Apex Construction and many other leading builders have specified the new insulation brick for their quality build programmes."

Tell customers where they
can find out more.

The Housebuilding Research Establishment test report on the Thermatex insulation brick is available from leading builders merchants or can be obtained direct from Therma Building Products Ltd., Therma House, Great Loughton, Bucks BU4 7T5
Tel: 0954 345678.

Let the editor know how to
find you.

Enquiries about this news release should be made to John Jackson, Therma Building Products Ltd. on 01954-345678. (Home: 0171-234 5678)

If you refer to others then allow the
editor to double check.

NOTE TO EDITORS: Apex construction will confirm their use of the product. Contact: Adam Smith, Managing Director, Apex Construction on 0171-456 7890.

13. Exhibitions and trade shows

Exhibition or trade show may seem an easy way to find new customers, however only a few shows are good, many are mediocre, and some are a complete waste of your time and money.

It's important to remember that the majority of trade shows and exhibitions are put on for the benefit of the show organiser, not the exhibitor or the visitor.

Exhibition organisers are like any other business, they run shows to make a profit. Admittedly, many are reputable and work hard to give exhibitors value for money. But for every good organiser there's a bad one intent on squeezing as much money as possible from the event - often at the expense of the exhibitors and visitors.

Never believe what exhibitors' sales literature, or their representative, tells you. They'll make you believe that large numbers of your potential customers will flock to attend, eager to walk onto your stand and buy!

Good organisers run the same events time and time again - so it's in their interest to make sure the events are successful. They put money and effort into promoting the event to ensure that the right type and number visitors attend. They know that exhibitors won't re-book next time, if they have a bad show. Trade shows promoted by reputable trade bodies or business institutions are better attended.

What you must always do

Before you book any trade show or exhibition phone a sample of your own customers. If many plan to attend that exhibition, other potential buyers will too. If only a few say they'll attend then don't expect many others to attend - think twice about exhibiting. If it's the first time you plan to exhibit then it's vital that you carry out this simple check. It'll take less than hour or so of your time and it can save you a large amount of money.

Don't fall for the sales talk

"If you don't book, your competitors will steal your customers". A good exhibition space sales person can fill an exhibition hall just on people's fear of missing out. Exhibition organisers also like to encourage important companies to provisionally reserve space, to build the credibility of their event. This encourages competing companies to book. The original companies that reserved are then forced to book as well.

If you can't be sure you'll meet new customers and win orders, then no show is worth attending.

Getting the most from an exhibition

Research shows that few new customers or orders are won on an exhibition stand. After the event most visitors can't remember which stands they visited or what they discussed. Some exhibitors take big orders on the stand to get public relations coverage. It's usually a setup.

If you decide not to attend and you're worried you may lose some of your customers, spend your money on your own corporate hospitality event a week or so after the exhibition; a day at the races perhaps. It'll probably cost you a lot less and you can invite your competitors' customers at the same time.

Finally, if you do decide to exhibit, always check afterwards to see if the number of orders or enquiries covered all your costs. Was the exhibition cost effective?

Death by "Can I help you"

Of all the opening remarks, "Can I help you?" is perhaps the worst question an exhibitor can ask a visitor to their stand. The majority, especially your competitors' major customers, simply answer "No thank you, I'm just looking". You just lost the order of the year.

Other visitors may reply by asking "Do you do this in a smaller size?" or "How much does this cost?", and you're obliged to give away information without even knowing who you're talking to - and it may just be a competitor.

The best way to open a conversation with a visitor is to ask a closed question that's about them, "Do you use our product/service in your business?".

If they answer 'Yes' you know you have an existing customer. Then simply ask who they are and ask if they're planning to upgrade/increase etc.

If they answer 'No' ask who does supplies them. Then find out if they're happy with their present supplier, 'Why are you looking to change'. The answer to this 'assumptive question' tells you if they are a real prospect.

14. Directories

Many advertise in directories defensively, "If I'm not in the directory, my customers may think I'm out of business". Before you invest your hard earned money consider:

- Is this directory used by my prospective customers to find products or services such as mine?
- Will my directory entry make them call me?

Each must be right or you've wasted your money.

Is it the right directory for me?

Ask your customers. Where did they find you? Which directories do they use? Simple questions which most customers are happy to answer. If most of your customers use a particular directory, then other prospective customers probably will too. If none use it, then save your money.

Which directory advertisements work best

The bigger your advertisement, the more enquiries you get - a rule of thumb that directory representatives like to quote. But it isn't necessarily true.

If your message is wrong, then few people respond - no matter how big your advertisement. You just attract lots of poor quality, time wasting enquiries. A good rule is that your main message must be clearly visible, touch on the customer's main need and be easy to read.

Get the message right

In a directory like Yellow Pages prospective customers have a choice of 50 or more competing suppliers. Most will short-list three to action. Make your headline and body copy specific only to the customers you really want.

1. When you advertise low price or very competitive rates, you attract bargain hunters.
2. When you advertise a product/service that appears like everyone else's, few people will call you - except to check if you're the cheapest.
3. When you advertise what your product/service does for the customer, and aim it at the right target customer groups, then you attract good quality enquiries. A marquee company simply wrote a headline, 'Beautiful Weddings' and got short-listed for many top events.

If your business relies on customers visiting your premises, try to include a map in your display. It can mean the difference between you or a competitor getting a visit.

15. Business image

Take a long, hard look at your business and the image it projects. Be objective. You only hurt yourself if you view it through rose-tinted spectacles.

Look in particular at each of the following areas.

If customers visit your business premises

Do your premises reflect the best aspects of your business or the worst? Do your customers feel comfortable or out of place? Do they know how to find you and where to park? Do your external and internal signs give the appearance of a successful, growing business or are they tired and long overdue for replacement?

Stationery and business documentation

Letterheads, envelopes, visiting cards, compliment slips, invoices, brochures, price lists, manuals, labels etc. Do all your customer-facing documents match your desired image? Are they consistent? It's often the worst item that set the standard, so check everything.

Communications

Written, telephone, customer service etc. Is it welcoming, polite, helpful, professional, timely etc. Try phoning your office.

Corporate identity

It's important to be distinctive - to stand out from the crowd. A small business can get a basic, working corporate identity designed for £1,000 - £3,000. Shop around several graphic designers to find one in your price bracket. (Make sure you use a qualified 'designer' - not a layout artist.) A simple identity covers the design of a logo, a basic colour scheme and the layout of your major stationery items. Printing costs will be extra.

CHECKLIST FOR YOUR BUSINESS IMAGE

For each of your main customer groups ask the following questions:-

- Is your projected image appropriate for the customers you sell to?
- Does your image reflect the value of your products/services?
- Does your image reflect where you want your business to be in the future?

Ten promotional planning hints and tips

1 If you get a good response don't change it

If an advert or mailer works well then there is every chance that you can successfully repeat it many times.

There are two things to consider.

- Do new target customers constantly rise to the surface? Customers for baby products, people moving home, buying cars, needing training and so on. Or do peoples' circumstances change; so one day they are not buyers but the next day they are.
- Your advertisement may attract a response from just a small percentage of potential customers each time it is used. Many may miss your message the first time. Others did not need your product/service the first time. Many decide to leave it 'till later and will not respond until they see your advert or mailer a second or third time. Keep going until you know that the response is really dropping off.

2 A finished dish wins more attention

Show a beautiful driveway and not the paving slabs. Talk about how people enjoy your wine, not the wine itself. Show a customer reviewing a rising profits graph, not a pictures of the accountancy practice partners. Don't sell pimple cream to teenagers to get rid of spots. Sell them a way to build suprem self-confidence for when they encounter members of the opposite sex.

3 Don't make your promotions media perfect

Nothing is as dull as 'perfect'. A pristine layout with exact, grammatically correct English rarely excite a great deal of interest. This can happen when a committee get their claws into an advertisement or brochure concept. PERFECTIONISM is otherwise spelt B-O-R-I-N-G.

4 Feature people who resemble your customers

Men relate to men; women to women; mothers to mothers. Business people respond when they see or read about other business people, like themselves, gaining benefit from a product/service. Older people always see themselves younger than they are.

5 Only address prospects who have a real interest

We're often tempted to advertise to a wide cross section of people in the hope of selling more. Often only a few have a real need for your product/service. Write you promotional message specifically for them..

6 You pull more enquiries if you show the price

Customers who don't have some form of price indication are less likely to respond. It's human nature. If you ask the price and you can't afford it, you get embarrassed, so it's safer not to show interest. Everyone who purchases eventually discovers the price so why not give them a price guide right away.

If you have misgivings about telling people what you charge, it is probably because your product/service or advert or mailer doesn't justify the price!

7 Copy ways that work.

Clever, innovative advertising ideas win awards but sometimes precious little business. Analysis of award winning advertisements shows that on average they return far less sales than traditional approaches. Some of the most effective advertising is a blatant copy of proven ideas. If you know an advert or mailer that consistently pull orders then copy the way it is done. But do make certain that you're not infringing their copyright. And don't make it so like theirs that it helps them to sell more at your expense.

8 Editorial is read by six times as many people.

Even the best positioned advertisement is read by fewer than one in ten readers. But many more read editorial. If your product/service is appropriate, why not write an editorial (Advertisorial) in your advertising space.

If you include a good activity picture, the sort editors pick for their magazine articles, you'll get your advert read. The magazine or newspaper may, however, insist that you have a notice saying that it is an advertisement. Place this notice at the top then few people see it!

9 Posters on a road should shout a message.

Simple poster messages in big, bold type produce the best results. Use three elements and no more. A headline, one picture and one short sub-message. Get your product or brand name into the headline or your contact details. Most people will have little time to read more.

10 Posters in buses, trains and waiting areas.

The rule for road posters does not apply to posters on railway and bus stations, on trains, buses and in waiting areas. Most passengers have nothing to do for long periods of time so give them something long and interesting to read. Pack in as much interest as you can, bearing in mind that your type size must be large enough to be read comfortably from a distance.

Ten copy writing hints and tips

1 Make the product/service the hero.

If the product/service satisfies an important need in the customer's mind then that customer will be interested.

Example:

Wholemeal bread is, in itself, a dull product. To health minded people, however, it's a way to enjoy the full flavour and richness of the countryside. It's a natural way to satisfy children's hunger and safeguard their health. Can you remember granny's wholesome bread?

It's also a way to replenish vitamins and minerals, to give you and your children an abundance of natural healthy energy; a feeling of radiant health. Wholemeal bread also keeps you healthy and protect you from cancer. Leave no doubt, in the mind of the reader, that your product or service will satisfy their important needs.

2 Long copy outsells short.

Direct response advertisers (*see them in your Sunday papers*), who ask for money with order, almost always use long copy. If it didn't work would they use lots of words? Long copy, however, only works if it is interesting to the reader - every single word, sentence and paragraph. So only talk about things that involve, concern and benefit the customer in some way.

3 Headlines which inform are read 75% more.

Headlines which describe your product/service do little or nothing to create interest. On the other hand, headlines which give interesting or valuable information pull readers attention.

A headline: *'Pure Australian honey'* is hardly exciting. *'It takes 23,000 workers two whole days to make one jar of pure Australian honey'* stirs the reader's interest and curiosity.

4 Talk to one person only.

Brochures, mailers and adverts are seen and read by just one person at any one time. They are not read out loud to an assembly of people. When you talk to people individually you talk informally - one to one. So write about how your product/service satisfies a personal need in that individual person. You'll find the words 'you, you'll and your', directly or implied, useful tools.

5 Talk to customers as human beings.

Pretend you are holding an interesting conversation with just one person. Write naturally - the way your reader usually talks. Use the reader's words, phrases and speech mannerisms. Don't try to write a perfect essay.

6 Short sentences and short paragraphs.

Listen to interesting public speakers. They use short phrases. Often incomplete. With breaks in-between. They say a little at a time. And leave time for you to reflect. They sometimes use single words as sentences. Powerful. Intriguing. Questioning.

Many people are reluctant to read. If you keep all your paragraphs short, and quick to read, you entice many more to read. So always open a new piece of writing with just one short sentence or phrase. One sentence with 10 words or less if you can.

7 Use simple and familiar words.

Read your copy out loud to a typical customer. Take it a paragraph at a time and ask them to confirm what you mean. And while you're at it, ask them if every paragraph makes them want to buy. You might find a red pencil or highlighter handy for this exercise.

8 Ban all capital text and headlines,

IT'S VERY DIFFICULT TO READ. FROM OUR EARLIEST READER BOOKS WE WERE TAUGHT TO RECOGNISE WORD SHAPES CREATED WITH LOWER CASE LETTERS. MOST PEOPLE READ SEVERAL WORD SHAPES IN SEQUENCE. WHEN YOU WRITE IN CAPITALS YOU FORCE THEM TO ABANDON WORD SHAPES AND READ CHARACTER BY CHARACTER, WORD BY WORD. IT IS TIRING AND UNCOMFORTABLE. GET THE POINT!

9 Serif type for body copy

Books, newspapers and most magazines are typeset in a serif 'book' font, like the one you're reading now. There's a very simple reason for this. It's easy to read.

Sans serif type, like this, is harder to read. It does look neat and tidy and it does suit technical stuff. But if people don't read, how much will you sell?

(See item 5 on page 7)

10 Simple, straight forward words and phrases

When we read our brain compares word shapes and patterns with a library stored from past reading.

'Available immediately on demand' is unfamiliar and takes a fraction longer to read.

A simple combination like 'ready to take away' is absorbed at a glance.

Fractions of difficulty add up to annoyance so search for simple word combinations.

Ten design & type hints and tips

1 A picture is worth a thousand words.

Make your picture tell a story about how your product/service satisfies the customer's need. Combine a picture with a caption underneath to make a story come to life.

Make the reader curious about what is going on in your picture. Make them ask 'what's going on here'. But don't get carried away with this concept. Curiosity must be completely relevant to how your product/service satisfies the customer.

2 Before and after pictures tell an better story.

Every 'before and after' advertisement tested by Gallup increased sales! Slimming and household detergent advertisements use this technique time and time again. Readers and viewers never seem to get bored with it.

3 Feature individual people and not a crowd.

Crowd scenes don't raise reader's interest. One or two people doing things, wins a lot more interest. Avoid using well known people or historic characters otherwise people remember them and not the product/service. British Telecom's television advertising is remembered for the well known actors - few people recall the products or services they promote.

4 Use photographs instead of illustrations.

Photos are true. Everyone knows this because we take our own photos. Drawings, on the other hand, can be false and untrue. An artist can cheat so you can't always believe what you see. What is your reaction when you are shown an illustration of a new house that is yet to be built. Will the finished house look quite so good?

5 Colour pull 100% more than black & white.

It's true, colour pulls twice the response but only cost around 40% more. If you have a fixed budget for a mail campaign then spend more on the mailer and reduce the mail list to those most likely to buy. You more than double your response.

6 Keep your layout simple

Remember the acronym KISS - (*Keep It Simple, Stupid!*) Layout or design has one purpose only, to help people to absorb your message. Reading must be made easy and what they read must be in the right order. Don't distract readers with pictures and graphic elements.

7 Get the layout right.

Don't put the headline, the most important opening message, at the top of the page. (See page 5) Research confirms that 100% more people read your main message if it's found in the second quarter down.

8 More read captions under pictures than copy

It's true. More people read captions (*under pictures and diagrams*) than read the main text. Captions should reflect customer benefits. Include your product or brand name. Link your captions to the text to encourage reading.

A short note

9 Use 'call-outs' to highlight features.

Diagrams and illustrations come to life when you link short notes to important features.

10 Drop capitals increase readership.

A another one of those silly little things that works. Drop caps draw the reader's attention to text.

11 White type on black or coloured background certainly looks smart. It also stands out from the crowd. But research shows that text is harder to read. Two identical adverts were tested. Black ink on white paper pulled twice the inquiries as white on black

12 Flush left

Since pre-school, our eyes have learned to read text set to a straight left hand margin. If you wrap text around pictures or set it on a diagonal, you make it very difficult for the reader. If it's difficult, people won't read.

13 Justified text

When you justify text you change the shape of words and gaps. One line is tightly justified and the characters or words are squashed together. The next is loosely justified, the characters and words are spread apart. At each change of line the reader's brain needs to recalculate the basic word measurement. A small adjustment, perhaps, but nevertheless an inconvenience. You also get hyphenation at the most inconvenient places, sometimes one line after another. When you keep text to its designed, uniform spacing it is far easier to read, unlike this text.

14 No full stop at the end of a headline

Publishing convention does not require a full stop at the end of a headline. Sub-heads and cross-heads, like the one in bold above this paragraph, also tend to follow this convention.

Sixteen Final checks

1. Is there interest, desire and conviction?

Does your main copy generate interest, raise desire and impart conviction using the AIDCA process?

2. Do you use a great motivator?

Does your copy touch on the customer's fear, exclusivity, guilt, greed or ego?

3. Do you open with your best benefit?

Do you promise a big benefit? Does your opening headline capture and hold the customer's attention? Do you tell the customer why it is important for them to read what you have to say?

4. Is your copy full of customer outcomes?

When you talk about your product, service or your business do you relate these to customer outcomes? Does every part of your copy answer the customer's question: "What will it do for me?"

5. Do you tell your customers enough?

Will they know enough to take action? Are there obvious questions in the mind of the customer which you have left unanswered? Have you included everything that the customer needs to know in order to say 'yes' to your action call?

6. Have you removed anything that does not benefit your customer?

Is there anything that you say that does not involve a benefit to the customer? Get rid of it. It kills the sale.

7. Is your customer involved in your copy?

Do you involve the customer when you talk about your product, service or your business? Do you use the word You, you'll and you're?

8. Do customer understand what you offer?

Have you only used words and descriptions that all your target customers understand? Make sure that all examples and references are understood.

9. Tell your customer what to do and why

Have you told your customers how to respond? Have you explained why they should, using a strong benefit?

10. Is what you say believable?

Have your customers any reason, whatsoever, to disbelieve what you claim? If they disbelieve they will never buy.

11. Are your sentences structured correctly?

Are your sentences the right way around?

"Individually crafted to a traditional pattern by our master carpenter and carefully hand polished with natural waxes, the walking stick is a gift to treasure for a lifetime."

In this first example the readers must hang on to the first two parts of the sentence before they find out what you are talking about.

"The walking stick is individually crafted to a traditional pattern by our master carpenter. It is then hand polished with natural waxes. A gift to treasure for a lifetime."

The second example works better. However, it is still rather dull and can be improved further by changing it from a passive to an active voice. (See next)

12. Do you use an active voice?

Talk about your product or service doing things. Not how things are done by your product or service.

"Our master carpenter crafts each walking stick to a traditional pattern. He hand polishes it with natural waxes. A gift you will treasure for a lifetime."

13. Are you specific? Do you avoid generalities?

Do you refer to things in a general sense, particularly benefits. Can anything you say be improved by adding detail. If so, add it. But don't add so much that it becomes boring.

14. Are you talking to just one person?

Does your copy read as if you are addressing one person alone? If you sound as if you are talking to the world and its dog, get personal.

15. Do you get to the point?

Don't start with an introduction? Don't prime the customer by drawing an association: "As a legal professional ..." ? Don't wastes time. Get straight to the point?

16. Double meanings?

Can your customer get the wrong end of the stick?

"Having checked that no bones are broken, the accident victim is comforted by the rescuer."

Who is checking what? This is in a passive voice. Use an active voice and you are less likely to create this mistake.

"The rescuer checked the accident victim for broken bones and then comforted him."

Research findings

Which brochure, mailer or advertisement sells best?

Three of the largest media research organisations tested promotional media to see which pulls the best customer response.

Gallup & Robinson - Evaluators of print advertising. They analysed 12,000 adverts.

Readex - Established since 1947, they specialise in researching business to business advertising and editorial.

Starch Advertising readership services - Starch specialise in analysing what people read, what they remember and what they react to.

Their six main findings are summarised below.

Elements of their findings are also discussed in greater detail within the manual.

1. Offer an impressive benefit.

(Essential for success in every customer communication)

Benefits are the touchstones of successful copy writing.

Your major benefit must be impressive. It must be what people really want.

- **Describe your major benefit specifically.**
- **Avoid generalisations at all costs.**
- **Be explicit and include the product or service.**
- **Detail what it is and how it works.**
- **Spell it out element by element. Put it into a list if this helps.**
- **Above all, make it easy to understand.**

It helps to paint a picture of your major benefits in the reader's mind. Tell a story, illustrate your point, step by step. If the reader doesn't understand exactly what's in it for them - the reason why they should buy - you won't make a sale.

2. Make them believe

(Essential when you offer an impressive benefit)

Your offer must be believable. Advertisers are rated the least honest or credible of any communicators. Brag or boast copy kills an advertisement or mailer stone dead. Don't make unreasonable claims. Show the product or service as it is and describe it honestly. It pays!

3. Make it easy for the reader to see and read.

(One of the greatest failings of design and layout today)

Readability is judged by all three researchers the most frequent failing of promotions media. Sophisticated advertisers and agencies often get this one wrong.

- **Simplicity wins every time.**
- **Good, simple layout.**
- **Give the copy room to communicate.**
- **Use a reading font so people can read easily.**
- **Don't distract the reader with unnecessary bits.**
- **Use clear pictures or illustrations that explain issues simply and easily.**

4. Stress what is unique

Stress what is unique about your offer. What is your Unique Selling Point (USP). Is it your attractive new styling, size, price, ease of use - perhaps the way you deliver your service, the package you offer, your guarantee?

Find something that differentiates your offering from your rivals and then tell your prospective customers about it.

5 Attract with something new

Curiosity makes people read. Something new is always much more interesting than something we already know about. Be creative.

- **New benefits get attention.**
- **New product or service features.**
- **New uses for products.**
- **New ways of providing a service.**
- **New ways of satisfying your customer's needs.**

6. Keep the reader involved

Make the reader see themselves in your message. Make the reader a part of your product or service story.

- **Get personal. Talk to a person**
- **Use the word 'you'.**

(Note: Don't overdo this when you are selling business products or services to professional people. Some may find you patronising. Some like to stand back and make an objective judgement.)

Here to help...



... let our team of experienced professionals put you in the picture - we offer advice in all the following areas:

- TAXATION
 - BUSINESS PLANS
 - ACCOUNTS / AUDITING
 - FINANCIAL PLANNING

Wills Farmer

TEL: 01678 876543 FAX: 01678 876554

Charles House, 19/20 Fairbank Road, Northampton NN7 5AB

Denton Holmes

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

It's not what you earn...
it's what you keep!

- we'll minimise your taxes
 - we'll help you sort out your accounting
 - our service is timely, with a clear fee structure
 - call to arrange an initial consultation... no charge.

Charles House, 19/20 St Bernards Road
Northampton NR6 7TE
Telephone 01678 654321 Facsimile 01678 654322

Denton Holmes

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

It's not what you earn...
it's what you keep!

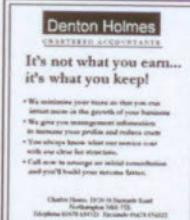
- We minimise your taxes so you can invest more in the growth of your business.
 - We give you management information to increase your profits and reduce costs.
 - You always know what our services cost with our clear fee structure.
 - Call now to arrange an initial consultation and build your income faster.

Charles House, 19/20 St Bernards Road
Northampton NR6 7IE
Telephone 01678 654321 Facsimile 01678 654322



Which firms will respond?

- Growing
 - Steady profitable
 - New start up
 - Messy
 - Struggling
 - Failing



Which firms will respond?

- ✓ Growing
 - ✓ Steady profitable
 - ✓ New start up
 - ✗ Messy
 - ✗ Struggling
 - ✗ Failing

1 essive tcome

outcomes

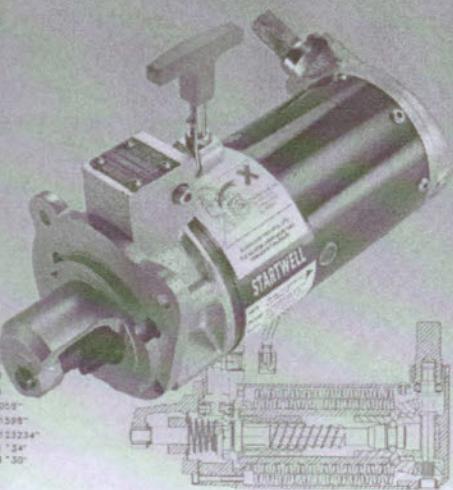
First principle of truly effective sales promotion

People are attracted
by what your
product or service

will do for them

STARTWELL

The High-tech Mechanical Starter



Markets:

- 35% **Marine**
- 30% **Agriculture**
- Construction**
- Emergency power**
- 20% **OEM**

Target yachts

THREE

important outcomes
your product will achieve
for yacht owners?

Yachts & boats and working / leisure boats

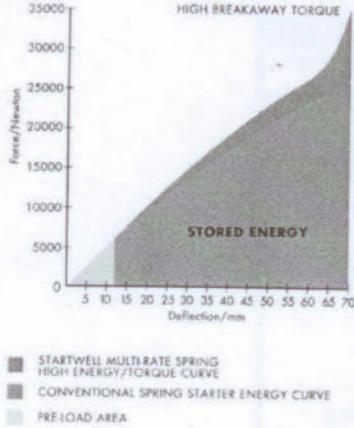
- ↑
People who can't see
how they will gain
- ↑
People who understand
how they will gain

Startwell is a totally self-contained mechanical starter (requires no external energy sources except for manual power). It is a direct bolt-on replacement for electric, pneumatic or hydraulic starter on diesel engines.

It is suitable for direct injection diesel engines up to 6.6 litre capacity (1.1 litre per cylinder, maximum of six cylinder).

Startwell is a flameproof, spark-free unit ideal for hazardous environments such as on and off-shore oilrigs, chemical plants and mines.

STARTWELL MULTI-RATE SPRING CONCEPT



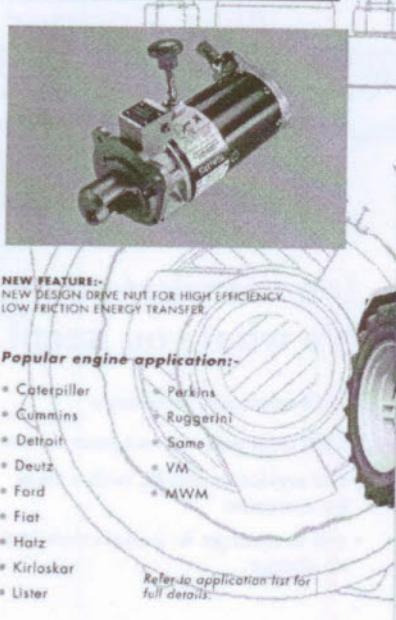
Startwell is also available in marine finish for applications such as life boats, work boats, and pleasure craft as well as emergency equipment on board ships.

Startwell is maintenance-free, simple to use and requires no special skills or tools to install on an engine.

Startwell is a versatile unit, and can easily be converted on site to suit a different application.

No toxic waste

Requires no batteries therefore no lead or acid disposal problems



Popular engine application:-

- Caterpiller
 - Cummins
 - Detroit
 - Deutz
 - Ford
 - Fiat
 - Hatz
 - Kirloskar
 - Lister
 - Perkins
 - Ruggenini
 - Same
 - VM
 - MWM
- Refer to application list for full details.



Battery failure?

Hand-start your engine with the Startwell mechanical starter

Startwell starters keep you and your crew safe while you're out sailing

- Motor safely in and out of harbour
- Emergency engine start in foul weather
- It's quick and easy to install

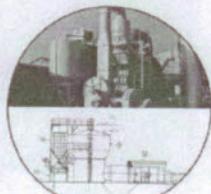
Keep safe at sea, call
STARTWELL STARTERS
TEL: 01234 567 8976



Which magazines,
newspapers
and directories?

Ask your existing customers
what they read and keep

Air
Pollution
Control



Fluidised Bed
Equipment

AMBUCO PROCESS EQUIPMENT LTD

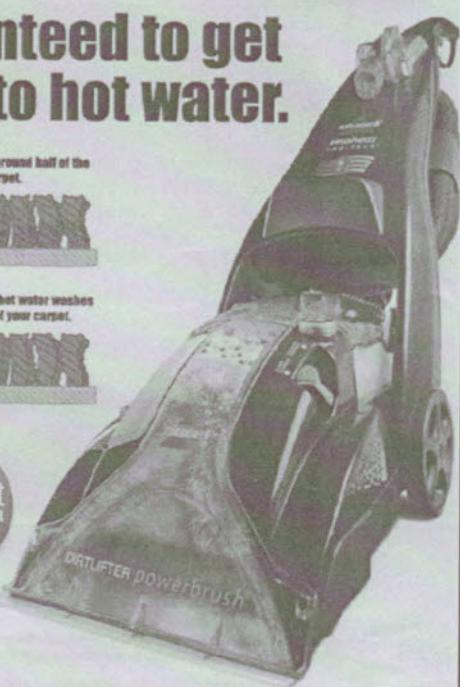
A m b u c o

Guaranteed to get you into hot water.

Vacuuming only removes around half of the
dirt in your carpet.



BISSELL deep cleaning with hot water washes
right down to the back of your carpet.



How often do you really clean your carpets? Vacuuming is fine, as far as it goes. But by leaving around half of the ground-in dirt in your carpet, it creates the perfect breeding ground for the tiny bugs that plague asthma and eczema sufferers and trigger other allergies.

BISSELL – the only cleaner that Washes & Protects your carpet.

PROheat PRO-TECH™. The only cleaner that uses hot water. Our unique built-in water heater flushes out the uninvited guests that harm carpet fibres and your family's health. And with BISSELL, every time you deep clean your carpet, you give it Scotchgard protection too, with our exclusive 'Wash & Protect' formula.



Asthma and eczema!

Flush out the tiny bugs,
dirt and pollen that harm
your family's health

Our unique built-in water heater
flushes out the uninvited guests
that harm your family's health
and the carpet fibers.



How often do you really clean your carpets? Vacuuming is fine, as far as it goes. But by leaving around half of the ground-in dirt in your carpet, it creates the perfect breeding ground for the tiny bugs that plague asthma and eczema sufferers and trigger other allergies.

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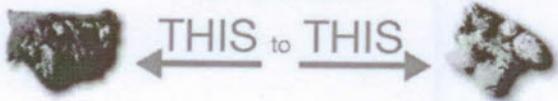
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your family's health. And with BISSELL, every
time you deep clean your carpet, you give it
Scotchgard protection too, with our exclusive
'Wash & Protect' formula.

In a recent survey 100% of fanciers confirmed significant improvement in their pigeons' droppings.

HEALTHY DROPPINGS = HEALTHY BIRDS

IT HAS BEEN PROVEN THAT OREGO-STIM CAN TRANSFORM PIGEONS' DROPPINGS IN LESS THAN A WEEK FROM



OREGO-STIM®



Meriden
ANIMAL HEALTH

BEFORE THE SEMINAR

OREGO-STIM®
PIGEON LIQUID

contains 4% Oregano Oil Liquid



AFTER THE SEMINAR

REMARKABLE RACING
BETTER BREEDING
NATURALLY

OREGO-STIM®

A Meriden Animal Health Product



100% Natural Supplement

Suitable for use in water
10ml per 2.5 litres

- Drier droppings
- Improved moult
- Silkier feather quality
- Maximises intestinal health
- Helps maintain a healthy immune system
- Overall improvement of general health and fitness
- Compatible with all other products.

Available from the following stockists:

B.I.F. Feeds, Sheffield, Tel: 01909 770065
B.Lee & Sons, Merton, Tel: 01883 691431
Boddy & Rickwood, Scarborough, Tel: 01723 586858
CJants Pet Products, Shropshire, Tel: 01697 462250
Crownfeathers of Wakefield, Wakefield, Tel: 01924 256186
Easington Lane Petfoods, Tyne & Wear, Tel: 0191 626 8268
Graham Tyson Pet Products, Rushden, Tel: 01933 317444
Kings Wines, Swindon, Tel: 0191 420 0257
Muntry & Milt, Leeds, Tel: 0113 262 3549
Nigel Coward, Thorne, Tel: 01732 712883
P.J. Lotts, Boston, Tel: 01754 820027
R & E Barnford, Leyland, Tel: 01772 456300
Willis Haynes, Co Antrim, Tel: 028 256 44480

Meriden Animal Health Limited
Crestfield Innovation Centre, University
Crestfield Technology Park, Crestfield M
Tel: +44 (0)1234 434130
Fax: +44 (0)1234 424123
Website: www.meriden.co.uk

REMARKABLE

COPY TODAY

Tried and tested

OREGO-STIM® has been researched over many years. Commercial, clinical and university trials are available in full detail, one of which is shown below.

OREGO-STIM® Powder: Efficacy of oregano essential oils in sows and their piglet feeds

University trial where OREGO-STIM® powder was administered during gestating and lactating feed period to sows and their piglets.

	Routine Control	OREGO-STIM®
Number of sows	12	12
Average number of piglets born alive per litter	9.92	10.08
Total birth weight per litter (kg)	15.18	16.28*
Total weight of piglets weaned per litter (kg)	64.62	70.59*
Average daily gain of piglets (g)	352	368*
Average feed intake of sow during lactation (kg/day)	5.86	6.33*
Average milk yield (l/day)	9.53	10.44*

Prof. Dr. J. Jansman, Department of Animal Science, Khon Kaen University, Thailand
* P.D. 65



Cost of OREGO-STIM® per sow: US\$ 1.07
Cost analysis shows an additional US\$11.60 profit/litter
Return on investment: 1:11

For use in sows of all ages

OREGO-STIM® is a 100% natural feed additive containing an exclusive oregano essential oil. OREGO-STIM® acts as a feed flavour and appetite enhancer and it has some other interesting benefits due to the antimicrobial and antioxidant properties of the pure oil of oregano.

Using OREGO-STIM® in the feed or water will enhance swine production by:

- Adding loin depth → leaner carcass = higher returns
- Increasing fertility, litter size and weaning weight
- Reducing stress during weaning
- Improving growth and feed conversion ratio
- Maximising intestinal health
- Decreasing incidences of diarrhoea caused by common intestinal diseases
- Optimising growth of the intestinal villi for better absorption of nutrients
- Helping to maintain a healthy immune system
- Improving palatability and feed intake
- Increasing sow's milk production

Unique features of OREGO-STIM®

- Anti-bacterial
- Anti-diarrhoeal
- 100% natural
- Traceability - FEMAS accredited
- Compatible with all products
- No bacterial resistance
- No residues
- High return on investment
- Full technical support
- Safe - Active ingredient GRAS registered by the FDA

Usage instructions

Easy to administer with an economically low inclusion rate
Powder: 250g - 1kg per tonne of feed
Liquid: 125ml - 500ml per 1000L of water

As situations very from unit to unit, Meriden technical staff may be contacted for assistance in determining optimum and customized application rates for specific feeding conditions and needs.

Meriden
ANIMAL HEALTH

INTRODUCING BT BUSINESS TOTAL BROADBAND. DESIGNED JUST FOR BUSINESS.

It's called BT Business Total Broadband, because it's everything business broadband should be. It's got a service that works around you, business strength security, and it's flexible enough to grow when you do.

Signs Express - the faster way to a bolder, better image.

Signs are an essential part of every business, and a well produced, professional sign enhances your business and attracts customers.

Signs Express are the country's leading sign service, with branches throughout the country, and a well established reputation for fast, durable, quality signs. From signs to factories, exhibitions to poster displays, cars and vans to boats and planes - Signs Express are the quick and cost-effective, professional answer to all your sign requirements.

EMPOWERED PRODUCTION

Using the cost of computer controlled production, rather than expensive screen printing, we can produce your logo or message with the same high degree of accuracy and after time. So you can print large until it's considered, whereas it's displayed.

1,000's OF TYPE STYLES

We offer hundreds of typefaces to choose from, and numerous special effects such as emboss, rounded and extended fonts, and many more. Turn to Signs Express for advice, or call to get your message across.

SPECIAL EFFECT VINYL

We offer numerous special vinyls and adhesive materials, metallic and static gloss effects are all

available. Please see our brochure for more information. We can produce signs in just about any size, shape and colour.

OTHER TYPES OF SIGNS

In addition, we also supply screen printed or enclosed signs, lettering, A-boards, semi-permanent signs, in fact all types of signs from a simple business to an entire signs system.

If there is something we haven't mentioned, give us a call. Signs Express really are the quick and easy answer for every type of sign.

INDUSTRIAL/ RETAIL SIGNS



DISPLAY GRAPHICS



VEHICLE GRAPHICS



Short or long copy.
What sells best?

Long copy **focused**
on the customer and how
they can expect to **gain**,
sells best

Which brochure, mailer or advert pulls best?

1. Offer an impressive benefit
2. Make them believe
3. Easy to see and read
4. Stress what is unique
5. Attract with something new
6. Keep the reader involved

Creative writing!

Pure Australian Honey

It takes 23,000 workers two whole days to make one jar of pure Australian Honey

Layout and fonts

- Simple, easy to follow layouts
- Add white space around headings
- Good reading typeface (font)
- No capital words
- Flush left, ragged right for ease of reading

Typical IBM copy

“Application Services

A fresh and measured approach. IBM Application Services can help unlock the value of your people, processes, and technology while strengthening the internal and external connections that drive your business. By applying innovative technologies such as Service Oriented Architecture, we can help you identify business pain points—and solve them.”

Love, sex, pain, betrayal, sacrifice, pity, remorse, redemption.

In Act I Alfredo falls for Violetta. By the end of Act III so will the 3000 men in the audience.



Verdi's La traviata The Royal Opera at the Royal Albert Hall, 12 - 23 May. Tickets from £10. Telephone 0171 589 8212

AIDCA EXERCISE

Structure your promotions effectively

Attention:

Research claims that the average person is aware of seeing or hearing 1,400 promotional messages each day, and ignores virtually all of them.

Think about the customers you want to win with your next promotional activity. What 'outcomes', 'improvements' or 'changes' can you offer them that will grab their interest and make them want to find out more?

List as many as you can in two minutes.

Interest:

What aspects or features of your product/service deliver the outcomes and improvements above.

List as many as you can in two minutes.

Desire:

What can you write or use to make the outcomes and improvement irresistible to the reader. (Pictures, case studies, examples, stories, recommendations etc.)

List as many as you can in two minutes.

Conviction:

What evidence can you use to make the reader believe it's all true. (Testimonials, logic statements, approvals, existing users, qualifications etc.)

List as many as you can in one minute.

Action:

What do you want the reader to take? (Call you, return a reply card, visit your shop, attend an exhibition, buy on line, visit your web site, order a catalogue.) List as many as you can in one minute.



Business Link Yorkshire organise free seminars and workshops throughout the region to support business development. We run over 80 popular event titles including:

- Exploring self employment
- Franchising your business
- How to be an outstanding manager
- How to get free publicity in the media
- Online Social Networks - reaching out to new customers
- Selling to the public sector: success strategies and tactics
- Creating a first class customer service

For information on your local events programme or to find out more about our extensive range of free business support services, please visit

www.businesslinkyorkshire.co.uk

or call 08456 048 048