

### Grab Your Audience with Good Ads

Why do we put so much advertising material into the bin without so much as a second glance?

Usually because too many ads are uninspiring, too much like all the rest or don't tell us what we want to know. We simply don't notice them, or perhaps haven't got time to.

We do take note however when we react to the first few words of an ad. These ads grab our attention immediately, to the point where we want to read on.

And there's the hook. If we're inspired we'll keep reading. Even if the ad is a bit long but continues to maintain our interest, we'll keep reading.

Okay, some people just never look at ads, but others will generally at least take a glance - and when they do you've got about two seconds to hook them. If you haven't managed it in those first few seconds, the ad or direct mail campaign could be wasted money.

So how do you make people sit up and take notice rather than file in the bin? A few tips can make all the difference.

#### Make them react

Something about those first words or sentence needs to make us react: "that's funny", or "that's weird", or "that's different". The worst kind of ad is one that generates no reaction whatsoever.

In his book *Write Right - The secrets of writing business letters and ads that really work*, Paul Dunn makes this point: "In other words, we want that opening to have IMPACT and draw the reader in. We want it to stimulate some reaction - either negative or positive - but some reaction nevertheless. We certainly don't want zero reaction or apathy."

Stirring a reaction might only require one word, or maybe one sentence. Either way it has to tempt the reader to want to know more. Finding out more might require the prospect to visit the shop, or even just continue to read the ad or letter. At this stage, that's all you're wanting.



*"The first line you write  
Must have absolute 'bite'  
You must quickly get your reader in  
Or else your letter will go straight to the bin."*

Paul Dunn, *Write Right - The secrets of writing business letters and ads that really work.*



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## What's In It For Me?

Commonly referred to as WIIFM, the *what's in it for me?* Component has got to be strong. It must make the person react to, and act on, the ad or letter otherwise you've lost them.

The person will be subconsciously asking: What's the benefit if I buy this product, or attend this seminar or visit this store?

Think about what people want. Will they be buying or receiving something that will:

- Speed up what they do currently?
- Reduce their costs?
- Save time?
- Give better results?
- Provide immediate back-up support and service e.g., computer system?

Will they in fact receive something that's *free*, *easy* to use, *proven* or *guaranteed*? These are known as some of the magic words of advertising and are often recommended for ads.



## Simple effectiveness

For a written ad, less is often more. A few words supported by an image may be all that's needed to stir a reaction. Simplicity is the key.

For letters, Dunn talks about using "Short, sharp sentences. Sentences of just a few words. Just one idea at a time."

So keep it snappy and keep it simple:

- Short sentences - just a few words. A few words can say it all.
- Lots of white space - make sentences into paragraphs. They're easier to read.
- Punchy opening - demand a reaction from the reader. Then you've hooked them.

## Greetings

Dunn also suggests that simple salutations are a winner for direct mail letters.

He says we should do away with the tradition of writing "Dear...". Instead, address letters the way you would address someone in person.

"[in person] you'd say 'good morning John'. 'Hi'. 'G'day Mr Smith'. 'Hello'. So why don't we do exactly that in letters?" he says.

Dunn points out this method of salutation makes your letter stand out because right up front it's different.

These days businesses have to try even harder to get their messages across. And that message has got to do its work in the first few words. As consumers we're constantly filtering out the 'junk' that comes across our desks or through our mail boxes. Smart businesses have to think 'beyond the norm' and find those words that will stir a reaction from the reader. That's the hook you need.

## Next Steps - Capture Your Readers

If your last advertising or direct mail campaign generated a poor response, get your red pen out and start editing:

- Cause a reaction - choose opening words that will make the reader sit up and take notice. You may have to shock, be quirky, subtle or clever. Above all, be different!
- Simplicity is key - don't go overboard with information. Remember, lots of white space. Less is more.
- Short, sharp - short sentences are easier to read.
- WIIFM? - Keep focused on what the benefit is to the customer.
- Magic words - try some of these words: *you*, *money*, *save*, *easy*, *love*, *discovery*, *results*, *proven*, *guarantee*, *free*, *amazing*, *incredible*, *new*, *how to*.

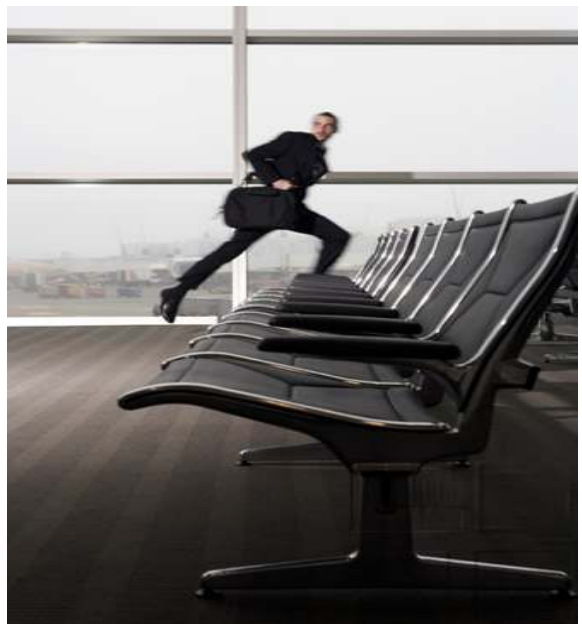
*Be sure to read each article with the mindset "How this could apply to our business". Thinking of it that way will guarantee that you get value. Also make copies for each team member. To really make sure something positive happens, work with your business development specialists to talk your team through ideas.*

## Time Poor Society

Consumers are bombarded with advertising and most of us do our best to avoid it. It's up to the advertiser to think beyond the realm of traditional advertising. Here are just a few reasons why much advertising just doesn't work any more:

- Ads in the newspaper are often glossed over - many of us have precious little time to read the news let alone the ads.
- Advertising material in our mail boxes is weeded out and dropped into the bin - we've only got time to get the important stuff.
- Advertising material in our email boxes is especially tedious - we get enough messages as it is; spam gets deleted without even being opened.
- And on the TV, ads are often muted, fast-tracked, or simply not seen - that's the time to make a cup of tea, chat to your partner, or, if you've taped the programme to watch later, skip to the end of the ad break.

**DARE** to be different - make people react!



## Monitor Business with Business Measures

Every business owner needs reliable figures to regularly check on business performance.

A valuable set of measurement data to collect is your annual customer numbers, average sales, number of customer visits and so on. Using these figures as a baseline you can then set realistic targets towards increasing profitability and continue to monitor the business' performance on say, a monthly basis.

In a retail store, for example, (although the exercise is appropriate for other businesses also), you need to collect the following data from the previous year:

- Number of customers = x
- Average sale per customer = y
- Average number of transactions per customer = z.

By multiplying the figures,  $x * y * z$ , you can calculate the business' annual turnover. Ensure this figure equals the total sales for the year.

The next step is to use these figures to set specific targets for the following year and record this data in your business plan, for example:

- Number of customers last year - plus targeted percentage increase
- Average sale per customer last year - plus targeted percentage increase
- Number of transactions with customers last year - plus targeted increase.



## How to Increase?

Small increases can make a significant difference to your turnover. The question is: HOW do you make those increases?

That's where you need to think about implementing marketing strategies to increase your total number of customers, or to increase the number of transactions made by existing customers.

For example, you could: reward existing customers for referring new people to your business; encourage add-on sales; directly target your customers to inform them of special offers or new products/services soon to be available, or even to inform them of other products and services offered by your business that they may not be aware of.

Maybe your focus for one year will be to increase your customer base; the next, to increase the amount each customer spends on each visit; and so on. Whichever way you plan to raise the figures, the basic measurement data will help you determine the targeted, annual sales figures for the current year.

## Prospects Conversion to Customers

Retailers should also record the number of people who enter their store - the prospects - and calculate the number of sales they make each day. Then calculate the percentage of sales to prospects. Record this figure and make it available to your team on a regular basis.

If everyone makes a conscious effort to improve on the conversion factor each day, i.e., increasing the number of prospects who make sales, it could significantly enhance the bottom line performance of your business.

## Marketing Expertise - 10 Tips for a Well-Run Business

You've got to be business savvy to run a successful business these days. And small business-owners, who often do not have the support of skilled consultants, have to call on their own experience, knowledge and common-sense. That's why, just for starters, they need to have good leadership skills, establish good systems, ensure staff understand about product knowledge and have great rapport with customers.

Another useful characteristic for any business owner to have is the ability to recognise and assess opportunities in the market place. Here are ten tips to keep in mind:

1. Understand and monitor the prevailing economic and industry conditions - look for opportunities.
2. Analyse the demographics of your customer base and customer profiles: what are their needs, disposable income?
3. Determine what pricing strategies can be implemented.
4. Know what your competitors are doing.
5. Determine promotional strategies to suit your target customers eg, media, word-of-mouth referrals; and plan promotional schedules around specific activities that will affect your customer base.
6. Develop a budget for each promotional activity prior to commencing, highlighting what you hope to achieve, what it is going to cost to promote and then analyse the performance against the budget expectation at the conclusion of the activity.
7. Measure the success of media advertising or promotion.
8. Checklist for maintaining sales:
  - Increasing the number of customers can be affected by: location, effective advertising, in store displays, demonstrations and special events
  - Exterior appearance is important
  - Effective hardworking employees are vital assets to a business
9. Hints on increasing average sales:
  - Companion selling
  - Selling higher quality
  - Merchandising/display
  - In-store signs
  - Stock mix
10. Increasing repeat visitors by customers:
  - Staff attitude
  - Staff product/service knowledge
  - Staff sales ability
  - Stock range
  - Business image/appearance/housekeeping
  - Direct mail
  - Birthday and Christmas cards
  - Newsletter
  - Customer clubs, outings, etc.



### An important Message

*While every effort has been made to provide valuable, useful information in this publication, this firm and any related suppliers or associated companies accept no responsibility or any form of liability from reliance upon or use of its contents. Any suggestions should be considered carefully within your own particular circumstances, as they are intended as general information only.*

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