

Writing High Response Messages Advertisements, Blog Posts and Email Marketing

The below rules and strategies have been compiled from books and published papers of well-known copywriters and online marketing experts including Dan Kennedy, HubSpot.com and CopyBlogger.com. And although advertising and marketing can have multiple purposes like brand building, awareness and introduction, our purpose here is to increase reader responses and motivate recipients to take action.

Easy-to-Read Structure

There is no perfect structure but when you glance at the writing, you should immediately “feel” that it is easy to read. This means, short paragraphs, proper use of headings, sub-headings, bolds, bullets, colors and italics. Anything that makes the content appear easy to read is encouraged. Not Intimidating.

To improve our recipient’s experience, our messages and layouts will be simple, brief and organized. We will accomplish this by using:

- Small words
- Short sentences
- Complimentary fonts (styles and colors)
- An image with caption

Must-Read-Content

What one-person finds funny or interesting, another person may not. Know your audience and develop your own style to delivery value through compelling messages. To keep the reader interested, our messages will...

- Include novelty – offer something new
- Be credible – include testimonials
- Speak aspirationally
- Be visual (show, don’t tell)

A common belief in creating compelling messages is to focus on selling the benefits to the user, then the advantages, and lastly the product features.

A car with 4-wheel anti-lock breaks sounds good. A car that can stop faster sounds better. And a car that is safer and saves lives sounds like the best car.

- Feature – 4-wheel anti-lock brakes
- Advantages – can help the car stop faster and it is safer

- Benefit – save consumer lives

Make-An-Offer

Have a purpose. Each and every message must have a specific purpose, like sign-up, join or buy now. To maximize our responses, our messages will...

- Always include an offer
- Always include a call to action (reason to respond now)
- Always include clear instructions on how to respond
- Always track and measure results

Header-Body-Wrap Up

All good stories have a beginning, middle and end. Sales and Marketing messaging follows the same format - header, body and wrap-up. There are many ways (creatively) to stylize a marketing message, but the goal of each step is always the same. Here are the goals for each step we will follow.

- Header - Capture the attention of the reader
- Body - Build credibility and interest in your offer
- Wrap-Up – Move the reader to take action

Header Structure

Your headline and opening paragraph is the hook. Don't bury the lead. Start simple but start with the most interest, most compelling information. Here is a simple formula with a couple examples for writing a good headline:

Formula = (number or trigger word) + (adjective) + (keyword) + (promise)

Example:

Before: How to bathe an elephant

After: 18 unbelievable ways you can bathe an elephant indoors

Example:

Before: how to sell your house fast

After: how you can effortlessly sell your home in less than 2 hours

Body Structure

Compelling body messages often include a strong image with a powerful caption. It can also include a testimonial, expert opinion, chart or graphic. Stay focused on the benefits and advantages of your offer and most importantly keep the reader moving forward to the Wrap Up.

To keep the reader interested and moving forward, we will...

- Use a large font for the first line
- Use 2 – 4 sentences in the opening paragraph
- Be Compelling - give the reader a reason to continue
- Use powerful images with captions
- Reduce skepticism – testimonials, outside expertise, sales ranking

Show, Don't Tell

Give examples of people, places and things in your body descriptions. Use action words to allow the reader to visualize the benefits to them.

To say the basketball game was fun last night, says little. Describe the sights and sounds of the game; transport the reader back to the game by describing people, places and things using the 5 human senses.

- Hear – crowd, buzzer, cheerleaders, players
- See – court, crowd, coach, players, scoreboard
- Smell – food, popcorn, perfume, cigarette smoke
- Taste – hotdogs, coffee, hot chocolate, soda
- Feel – bench, pants, shirt, cold, hot, crowd

Wrap-Up Structure

Including a Call-to-Action is a must in conclusion like Buy Now or Sign-Up Here. This is the sole reason you contacted the reader and the reason you asked the reader to spend their valuable time with you.

Direct the reader to take action and show them a clear path.

- Sum up key selling points
- Include call-to-action
- Testimonials
- Social Media links should be included either top or bottom

Final-Thoughts

So what's next? I have a well-crafted, high response message with an interesting header, a compelling offer, a strong image, benefits list, credibility and call to action.

Well, you need the right target audience to test the response rate. You need to support your message with a landing page to convert sales and submissions. You will need an auto-response receipt confirmation to follow up sales and submissions. And lastly, you will need to continue track responses and tweak you message in search of the perfect high performance response message for each target audience.

This document is focused on creating high response messages, but a good advertisement, blog post or marketing email is just one step in the process.

Target Audience:

A well-crafted message must have an appropriate target audience. Be sure to do your research, segment your list and send the right message to the correct audience.

Landing Pages:

A high performing message has a single purpose, a call to action. Be sure when the reader takes action, you deliver on your promise, clearly and precisely i.e. sign-up form, landing page, download link, etc.

Auto-Response Confirmations:

Sign up forms, downloads, email submissions and purchases all need timely follow up. Most can be handled with an email, but a good auto-response email is like a good marketing message, it has a specific purpose. It can be limited to a simple receipt confirmation or it can deliver additional value (surprise gift) or move the reader along to more information or offers.

A/B Testing:

The best performing messages, like a great book, go through edits and revisions i.e. A/B testing. Continue to test new offers, new message styles and formats and new audiences. Track the results and make changes as you go.

Good Luck!