

Direct Response Millions

LESSON TEN

by

Cameron Fulton

How to work smarter not harder, to make BIG money!


Anyone can apply these proven techniques, simply and easily with start-up capital from as little as £50. Countless others are already millionaires from using these principles and now you can join them!

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Welcome and a huge ‘Thank You’ for purchasing ‘Lesson Ten’ of the twelve part course, ‘Direct Response Millions’.

This month we will be looking at The List and Customer Service, but first I want to give you some examples of good and poor copy that I have critiqued. These will help you determine why some copy is good and other copy is so terrible. **Remember you should now be keeping and reading every piece of ‘junk’ mail you can get your hands on.**

Great Letter #1

Here is the world's most successful direct mail letter, written by Martin Conroy for The Wall Street Journal. Since it was first mailed in 1975 it has remained their solid control despite dozens of attempts to out-beat it, and has netted a cool *billion dollars* in subscriptions for the mailers!

I have gone through this letter and pointed out why it is so good. The sales letter is in normal type and my comments are in *[square brackets]* italic.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

World Financial Center, 200 Liberty Street, New York, NY 10281

[Amazingly, there is no headline, but then The Wall Street Journal will be well known to the readers.]

Dear Reader,

On a beautiful late spring afternoon, twenty-five years ago, two young men graduated from the same college. They were very much alike, these two young men. Both had been better than average students, both were personable and both - as young college graduates are - were filled with ambitious dreams for the future.

[The letter opens with a believable story that sparks the reader's curiosity. Stories are very powerful communicators and a great way of drawing the reader into the copy. Everybody can identify with the characters that are being portrayed and this is crucial for gaining rapport, building trust and making the claims plausible. The first paragraph sets the scene and is very specific (...twenty five years ago...). By the way, this letter works equally well with women.]

Recently, these men returned to their college for their 25th reunion.

[Everybody loves reunions and the reader is now even more curious to see how they will have turned out.]

They were still very much alike. Both were happily married. Both had three children. And both, it turned out, had gone to work for the same Midwestern manufacturing company after graduation, and were still there.

[This is clever. The two men still seem to be alike, which gives the comparison in the next paragraph even more impact. Notice how so far, these two men seem to have it all.]

But there was a difference. One of the men was manager of a small department of that company. The other was its president.



[This is a superb contrast and is also believable. He could have said one is a worker in an office and one is its president. But because he put 'manager' the reader thinks, 'oh he's done quite well for himself', it is only when they read the next sentence that they realise just how much better he could have done for himself! Also, 'manager' in comparison to 'president' makes The Wall Street Journal seem far more influential in one's success. Most of the target audience will be either managers already or striving in that direction, and this advert is saying to them 'look how high up you could be'. Note the use of short, punchy sentences to add power to this statement. Overlong sentences lack impact and will have your mailshot sailing in to the waste paper basket.]

What Made The Difference?

Have you ever wondered, as I have, what makes this kind of difference in people's lives? It isn't a native intelligence or talent or dedication. It isn't that one person wants success and the other doesn't.

["...what makes this kind of difference..?" gets the reader thinking about him/herself and the reasons that they are likely to come up with are the commonly held myths that the writer sweeps aside as nonsense. This leaves them open-minded about the reason the writer gives:]

The difference lies in what each person knows and how he or she makes use of that knowledge.

[Here's the reason why. A true, bold statement that gives the reader hope, and hope is a very powerful hook.]

And that is why I am writing to you and to people like you about The Wall Street Journal. For that is the whole purpose of The Journal: to give its readers knowledge that they can use in business.

[And here's the solution. This is saying: we are here to provide you with the knowledge you need to succeed. This is a strong benefit. "...the whole purpose of the journal..." is also a benefit, because they are basically saying 'we are here to serve you'.]

A Publication Unlike Any Other

You see, The Wall Street Journal is a unique publication. It's the country's only national business daily. Each business day, it is put together by the world's largest staff of business-news experts.

[These impressive features give The Journal credibility.]

Each business day, The Journal's pages include a broad range of information of interest and significance to business-minded people, no matter where it comes from. Not just stocks and finance, but anything and everything in the whole, fast-moving world of business. The Wall Street Journal gives you all the business news you need - when you need it.

[More Benefits and features.]

Knowledge Is Power [benefit]

Right now, I am looking at page one of the journal, the best-read front page in America. It combines all the important news of the day with in-depth feature reporting. Every phase of business news is covered. I see articles on new taxes, inflation, business forecasts, gas prices, politics. I see major stories from Washington, Berlin, Tokyo, the Middle East. I see item after item that can affect you, your job, your future.



[Impressive features that are written as benefits for the reader; everything important that affects our readers, the journal concentrates on. "The best-read front page in America..." cleverly advertises just how big their readership is (and if all these people are reading it, it must be good, it is like using a testimonial without actually putting one in). It also appeals to people's desire to belong and their need for approval.]

And there is page after page inside The Journal, filled with fascinating and significant information that's useful to you. The Marketplace section gives you insights into how consumers are thinking and spending. How companies compete for market share. There is daily coverage of law, technology, media and marketing. Plus daily features on the challenges of managing smaller companies.

There's something for everybody.

[Although this is all features, the writer turns them all into a benefit by relating them to the reader ("...useful to you.") and they're necessary to make the reader realise that The Journal is an interesting read. Most business journals are dull, dull, dull, and therefore don't get read. However, an informative and interesting journal holds far more appeal.]

The journal is also the single best source for news and statistics about your money. In the Money & Investing section there are helpful charts, easy-to-scan market quotations, plus "Abreast of the Market," "Heard on the Street" and "Your Money Matters," three of America's most influential and carefully read investment columns.

["Carefully read..." gives a feeling of hot information.]

If you have never read The Wall Street Journal, you cannot imagine how useful it can be to you.

[The writer has pre-empted the question forming in the reader's mind and answered it. This sentence also causes the reader to wonder what The Journal is like and perhaps they would like to read it, but how much is it?]

A Money-Saving Subscription *[Benefit]*

Put our statements to the proof by subscribing for the next 13 weeks for just \$37. This is the shortest subscription term we offer - and a perfect way to get acquainted with The Journal.


[Written as an enticing invitation, and most people would be happy to risk \$37 for something that could change their life.]

Or you may prefer to take advantage of your better buy - one year for \$139. You save over \$50 off the cover price of The Journal.

[Or this price for those who are more convinced or can afford the full subscription. Even if they don't subscribe now, they are more likely to buy The Journal next time they see The Journal in a shop from reading this advert, so the publishers win either way.]

Simply fill out the enclosed order card and mail it in the postage paid envelope provided. And here's The Journal's guarantee: should The Journal not measure up to your expectations, you may cancel this arrangement at any point and receive a refund for undelivered portion of your subscription. *[This tells the reader exactly what to do in a clear, straightforward manner.]*

If you feel as we do that this is a fair and reasonable proposition, then you will want to find out without delay if The Wall Street Journal can do for you what it is doing for millions



of readers. So please mail the enclosed order card now, and we will start serving you immediately. *[Strong request for action. Act NOW without delay. Delay in mail-order is death.]*

About those two college classmates I mention at the beginning of this letter: they were graduated from college together and together got started in the business world. So what made their lives in business different? *[Nice reminder of where we started.]*

Knowledge. Useful knowledge. And its application. Like that in The Journal.

An Investment In Success

I cannot promise you that success will be instantly yours if you start reading The Wall Street Journal. But I can guarantee that you will find The Journal always interesting, always reliable, and always useful.

[A minor flaw to increase credibility, but worth buying anyway because you will still benefit. No ridiculously inflated claims here.]

Sincerely,

Peter R. Kann
Publisher

P.S. It's important to note that The Journal's subscription prices may be tax deductible. Ask your tax advisor. *[Strong benefit included in the PS]*

Great Letter #2

The following letter written by Stuart Goldsmith, sold over £300,000 worth of product in one year! This is a classic 'business opportunities' letter. Needless to say, every word of this letter is true - it is not a made up story to get people to part with their money! The letter, is about the author, David Fairweather.

Could You Use An Extra £12,000 un-taxable CASH each year?


I have been making good money year in, year out, for just one hour of 'work' per week. I would like to share my secret with you.

[A great question headline must produce an emphatic 'yes' in your readers' minds. Headlines that leave the reader thinking 'so what, who cares?' or 'no', are a disaster where response is concerned. You may be sceptical at this stage, but you would almost certainly answer 'yes' to that headline. Also, the amount is credible. It does not promise an extra £10 million a year! The headline includes the first three strongest benefits, £12,000, un-taxable, and to make this money each year. The fourth strongest benefit is in the sub-head - only one hour of 'work' per week, this appeals to those readers who are essentially lazy i.e. most of us!]

Dear Friend,

Would you be interested in a way of generating £1,000 extra cash each and every month? Supposing this cash was also un-taxable? Wouldn't that be a bonus? What would you be prepared to do for £1000 in £50 notes, right in your hand each month? How does one hour of easy work every week sound? I know what you're thinking, I couldn't believe it either when I was told about it five years ago.

[The provocative question opener restates the main benefits (£12K and un-taxable). Questions asked one after another provoke the reader into agreeing with what I say, so that



when I request that they read my letter through to the end (see below), they are likely to do so. Also, notice I am starting to address objections right here in the first paragraph.]

I want you to read this letter through to the end. In return, I promise that I will tell you how to make the cash in this letter. I won't be hinting. I won't be offering tantalising glimpses of what the method might be - I'll actually tell you the details so that you can decide whether or not to use it for yourself.

[By saying that the system for making 12K is contained within the letter, I offer an incentive to keep reading until the end. This also addresses a major problem of such letters, that they tease and tantalise about 'the method' but you have to send off money to even begin to find out what it's all about. Not so here.]

In a while, I am going to ask you a 'qualifying' question. If you answer wrong, then this system of cash-generation is probably not for you. If you answer right, then you are perfect for this. *[This is appealing to people's pride - who likes to think that they're unsuitable? Also, it is tantalising. What could be the question? Remember, at this stage we're trying to keep the person READING. Also, it adds credibility. This may not be for everyone. That sounds reasonable.]*

A good friend told me about this method a few years ago. My first reaction was; "Come off it! You can't make money like that - it's just not possible." *[I was incredulous, just like you - so we're on the same side...]*

Then he showed me his statements and meticulous records going back several years. Sure enough, there was the money. Sometimes it was £14,000, sometimes £6,000. There was one good year when he made £18,000 cash, and one terrible year when he only made £4,000 cash. It averaged out at around £12,000 per year. Then he told me the clincher: the Inland Revenue knew about the money, but didn't want a penny in tax - then, or ever! That got my attention. And when he said cash, he meant exactly that! Bundles of £50 notes! He showed me the thickest wedge of money I have ever seen, and that was just 'handy' money. He'd banked the rest. *[Revealing a minor flaw (only making £4,000), helps to strengthen the credibility of the system. I also reassure readers that the 12K being tax-free is legal.]*

After closely questioning my friend for many hours over several evenings I adopted the method myself, but not before I had contacted an independent third party to verify the results. I openly admit, being the most sceptical person you could meet, that I had been trying to find the 'catch'. *[I was probably more sceptical than you are, yet I was convinced that it could work. And what is this 'independent third party'? That sounds like I did my homework.]*

Now let me say something immediately about this system. It is NOT a 'Get Rich Quick' scheme. I have tried dozens of those over the years. I've bought at least twenty manuals telling me how to run various schemes and fantasies. None of them worked. They were all a waste of money. They all promised I would get rich by using their method. I should have known better. They promised £1 million and other crazy figures like £50,000.00 every month. Bonkers! But my greed and curiosity got the better of me, and so I kept buying manuals. I guess the only people who made money were the writers of those manuals.

[I knew people were probably thinking that this was another 'get rich quick' scheme, and as most people have been burned by these scams, I had to convince the reader that this method wasn't one of them. The best way of doing this was to tell them my own story about how I wasted my money on them, in a 'I've been there too, I'm on your side' way. Probably what the reader has done and is why he/she is hesitant to try my system. Also, how many such mailings say this is NOT a Get Rich Quick Scheme? Most of them say the opposite, so this marks mine out as different. Remember, this is David's story, not mine.]

Using my method, you will not 'Get Rich Quick' - I guarantee that (as the manuals say!). In fact, it is extremely difficult to make more than £20,000.00 maximum every year. In



five years of doing this, I have never made more than £18,000.00 cash in any one year - that was my best year. That's why I say £12,000.00. This is easy. Anyone can do this if they follow my system to the letter. But more than this, regularly? I've never managed it, and don't know anyone who has. Yes, you'll make a million out of this - if you're prepared to wait a hundred years, that is! If you're after a million or two, then this system is NOT for you so keep buying the manuals. If you want an extra £1000 cash each month, then this is your answer. *[More credibility. I'm not promising fantasy numbers.]*

Believe me, this cash has come in very handy. I work full time and so the extra £250 cash every week was just 'bunce' to me. I used it to add quality to my life. All those little extras which I could never afford before. Decent clothes, a great holiday, a better car. No, I do not drive a Rolls Royce. Only manual writers get photographed next to 'their' Rollers - if you believe that! Let me be clear, £12,000.00 doesn't buy a lot these days, but it certainly takes the 'edge' off life and allows you to have a lot more fun. I would say it allowed me to stop existing, and start living a little. It doesn't sound much, but believe me, it makes all the difference in the world. Anyway, I always have a wallet stuffed full of cash, so at least I feel rich!

*[Doesn't this make you yearn for that extra 12K cash? I have readers daydreaming about what they would spend the money on. The rest of the letter goes on to explain how you can make this money by gambling on horses according to a particular system which, statistically over the season will win you around £12,000. This is true by the way. Tens of thousands of people make a living as pro gamblers. They are urged to get the full system by taking a monthly course called **Racing For Cash**, at £19.95 per month.]*

PS It really is possible to make an extra £1000/month cash with this system.

PPS The course is only £19.95/month and I am giving you a gift worth £49.95 FREE with month one!

PPS Sign up NOW, today, before the moment passes and you forget. This is a unique chance.

Three postscripts that restate the main benefits, and if the reader simply reads the PSs he/she will know what is on offer. The last PS urges the reader to take action because to direct marketing - delay is death!

Great Letter #3

Here is the opening page of another Stuart Goldsmith classic selling, 'Betting On A Fortune'. (A course about Futures Trading.)

How You Can Make A Fortune From The Coming Stock-Market Crash

[Brilliant, attention-grabbing headline! It puts fear into the reader about the pending stock-market crash, thus injecting them with a sense of urgency, so they are forced to read the letter now, rather than thinking "oh how interesting, I must read that sometime" (which becomes never). However, although I gave them a headache, I also hint that I the 'aspirin' is contained within the letter. I also generate curiosity in the reader; most people believe you can only lose when the stock market crashes.]

Dear Friend,

A few months ago the UK stock market crashed a thumping 300 points in a few short days! Billions were wiped off the value of UK shares. Fortunes were made and lost.

A few days later the market took another nose-dive, this time nearly 200 points!



On each fall I made thousands of pounds. You can do this too.

Then the market started to recover, rising from its lows in a series of faltering steps.

On each climb I made thousands of pounds. You can do this too.

[Short, punchy sentences. Look what I did; you can do this too. Making money is a HUGE benefit - especially thousands of pounds. I make it sound like it's easy making this kind of money as well.]

It's been a 'hang on by your nails' roller-coaster ride. The sort of ride I LOVE. The bigger the ups and downs, the more money you can make.

But this is only the beginning folks. Stand by for the mother of all fairground rides coming your way in the next few months. This ride hasn't been passed by any health and safety jobsworth. This ride will end in oblivion for millions of small investors as the car hurtles down the near vertical rail and smashes into the solid concrete wall at the end. You are about to see a generation of savings wiped out in one day. You can kiss your pension fund goodbye as it reduces to half the value, or less overnight. It will take ten years to recover back to present levels. This has happened before and is about to happen again.

[Notice the 'in your face' from-me-to-you copy. Vivid. Colourful. Emotional. Fear. One of the most provocative hot buttons. Men, in particular love the excitement of risk-taking.]

This will be the BIG ONE - 1929 revisited. *[And I just made it worse!]*

By any sane valuation, shares are at an all time bloated, fantasy level. Many companies are valued at twenty to thirty times their current earnings. In other words, today's value includes the next thirty years of profit! Crazy! Let's say you were thinking of buying a local company which made £1million profit last year. What would you say if the owner asked you for thirty million pounds for his company? You'd have to wait three decades just to get your money back! Yet these are the insane levels at which mug punters are buying shares on today's market. Many of these people were still wearing short trousers in 1987, and have never even heard of 1929! They are blissfully ignorant of crashes and protracted bear markets. They think the stockmarket can only go one way - and that's UP!

[People are not gullible, if you make a claim you have to validate it, like I did here - I am basically saying, yes, I do know what I am talking about. I also give a good reason why the market will crash.]

The letter went on to sell a £57 manual on how to trade financial indices futures.

Great Letter #4

Look at the following excellent letter used by Nightingale-Conant:

"Why I Hate Jay Abraham"

(But how he can probably boost your company's profits by 25, 50 or even 1000% - if you can stand the guy)

[Attention-grabbing headline - people love gossip. Aren't you just itching to find out precisely why the writer hates Jay? And for those readers who aren't motivated by gossip, with a profit-boosting track record like that, you just have read on. This headline, for me, is one of those very rare MUST READ THE REST headlines.]



Dear Executive,

One of the greatest modern day business and marketing geniuses must certainly be Jay Abraham. He charges £3,000 per hour for his private consultations and his clients pay willingly because they quickly generate higher profits - using the same people and the same allocation of time and budgets. He reveals how to change their strategies and their approach to the market. And he has probably made more money for the people he works with than any other expert in the world.

[Wow! If people pay that sort of loot, he must be the best! An impressive track-record written as benefits to the reader because this letter will be aimed at business owners and entrepreneurs. They will be wondering how he can help them.]

I first heard about Jay because my company, Nightingale Conant, is the world's largest publisher of audio training programs and one of the major players in organising executive seminars and workshops. I was intrigued that so many of my associates were talking about Jay... he was their hero.

[Notice how the letter gradually increases the credibility of Jay Abraham in the eyes of the reader using examples of business people.]

I decided I had to see this man for myself - I signed up for one of his weekend seminars and received his pre-course material a few days later. When I listened to the material I received, it immediately expanded my horizons. I saw possibilities and opportunities where they had never existed before. Within a few months of trying out our first Jay Abraham inspired idea, we made something close to £600,000.

[Wow! £600,000 just from one idea; that is one massive benefit. When the first 'little' idea someone gives you produces this amount of profit, you tend to take that man's advice and recommendations seriously.]

But something was bothering me... I began talking to other people about Jay and soon discovered that there was a lot of mixed feelings about this guy. In conversation with a business colleague one day he mumbled a couple of unkind words about Jay, and I said something like "Oh, you too?" We started to compare notes on this fellow Abraham, and agreed that he definitely was not the Abraham of biblical fame. And now for the first time, I'm going to share with you my grievances about the man...

[This is the end of the first page, which is a brilliant page turner - most people would just have to turn the page. Fantastic build-up, the reader will be dying to know what he's really like. People LOVE gossip. Also note the introduction of a flaw in the product to add credibility. He's a genius who will make you a packet, BUT he's a pain in the neck. Note that we're at the end of page one and yet we still don't know why he hates Jay Abraham. A pro copywriter will leave the reader guessing (and hence reading), the amateur would have revealed the reason in the first paragraph and hence lost the build-up of anticipation. Aren't you left dying to find out the reason why?]

Terrible Copywriting

There are far more examples of bad copywriting than good. Here is some poor copywriting. I have given you the whole letter first and then I have written my criticisms underneath. Both of these letters were awful.



Bad Copy #1

[Big Logo]

Mr C Fulton
Managing Director
[Etc.]

FROM FEBRUARY 1st, MOST ENVELOPE MANUFACTURERS WILL BE IN A FLAP

Dear Mr Fulton

Not everyone will welcome the launch of Empire~Castiglioni with open arms, but anyone who uses envelopes will!

That's because we're bringing you an entirely new concept in envelope manufacture.

You can trust us to:

- * Deliver on time every time
- * Provide a consistent level of quality you've never experienced before
- * Save you money because we'll deliver at least the quantity you ordered - and we won't charge for our overs!

And that's not all - Empire~Castiglioni can open up a whole host of marketing opportunities for you:

- * Up to 6 colours, including metallics on any size envelope you need;
- * Any number, shape or size of window, front or back
- * Printing on gloss, silk, matt or cartridge paper

I guarantee all those envelope manufacturers who deliver late, provide inconsistent quality and fall short on order quantities will be in a flap.

But from 1st February there's one person who won't be, you!

[Illegible squiggle signature in black]

Simon Harrison
MANAGING DIRECTOR

PS Call me directly on 0161 123 45678 to arrange a meeting with one of our Sales Representatives.

Here are some of the many problems with this single page letter:

1. Massive logo which promises 'Quality and Delivery,' as though actual delivery of the products you ordered was some kind of benefit! Everyone promises 'quality' - it is a meaningless 'noise' word which carries precisely zero weight.



2. 'Cute' headline in RED which caused the writer to rock with mirth at his own cleverness, but which contains no benefit. Humour also makes the customer question the validity of their claims. If you phone them up when your order is late are they going to treat you courteously and with respect, or are they going to crack some joke and laugh the whole thing off? Attacking the competition is rarely a good marketing ploy, it just makes you look jealous.

3. The headline is written in all capitals making it difficult to read; Times New Roman would have been a much better choice. The headline font is also the same font as the body copy which is a sans-serif face. Always use a serif face.

4. The body copy is not written in Courier font or Times New Roman. The font they have used is hard to read.

5. The second bullet point is assuming and arrogant. How do they know I've never had a consistent level of quality before? Do they take me as being sloppy? Do they have me pigeonholed as somebody who would accept poor quality? This could be considered quite insulting.

6. Feature/company name driven. You can't even pronounce this company, so I'd keep it well in the background. Speaking personally, I'd also change my company name, no matter what the cost, no matter what the 'illustrious history.' **A company name you cannot remember, pronounce or spell is BAD NEWS.**

7. The lead benefit is 'fast delivery.' Is late delivery *really* the number one gripe of envelope buyers? I doubt it very much.

8. The second benefit is 'consistent level of quality.' Are envelopes usually inconsistent in quality (i.e., some flaps are gummed, then the next hundred are ungummed, then the following 500 are incorrectly sized...etc.)? I doubt it very much. Only with bullet point #3 is there the beginning of something which could possibly be construed as a benefit to the customer - cost. I strongly suspect this is the most important benefit to those buying millions of envelopes.

9. Finally, we get on to some good benefits, so this letter starts off badly, then redeems itself somewhat.

10. The joke was *very* lame the first time, but the copywriter is so tickled at his wit, that he feels he needs to repeat it at the end. I'm surprised he didn't add "Get it?"

11. The PS is sloppy and sounds like a command. It would have been better to say: "Please call me on my personal, direct line to discuss your envelope requirements."

The way it is worded at the moment can be translated thus: "I instruct you to call me right this moment! When you do, I'll shunt you off to an underling."



12. At the bottom of the page.... another logo. Boy, they really love their logo!

Bad Copy #2 Total Marketing Solutions

Mr C Fulton
Managing Director
[Etc.]

Dear Mr Fulton,

You may have heard about the impending launch of a new exhibition, Total Marketing Solutions, which will take place at the NEC, Birmingham, from the 12th to 14th September this year.

The attached leaflet is quite literally 'Hot off the Press' and details all the aspects of the exhibition. Both the Direct Marketing Association and the Chartered Institute of Marketing have given their support, the floor plan is now drawn up and we are now ready to go.

The interest that TMS has already generated is incredible, and strengthens our initial research that an event in the Midlands, in the Autumn, will be of huge interest to visitors from specialist and general marketing disciplines as well as to senior managers and buyers from all industry sectors.

Involvement in this exhibition is only £300 per square metre including modular shell scheme (if required). If you would like to see a floor plan of the event, and check the availability please contact me on 020 8910 7870 or email at tms@reedexpo.co.uk

I look forward to hearing from you and maybe even welcoming you to the first of many Total Marketing Solutions Exhibitions.

Yours sincerely

[Large illegible scrawl for a signature]

Stephen Redman
Sales Manager

Here are some of the problems with this letter:

1. No headline.
2. I certainly *haven't* heard of this so why would I want to read on? What the hell is it? What are the benefits? I have no idea of the benefit to me for having a stall at this exhibition. Almost any paragraph would have been better than this sad effort. How about "Would you like to reach 1,795 key buyers of your products in a single day?"
3. The attached leaflet is NOT "quite literally hot off the press" it was cool when I received it. 'Quite literally' means it *really is* hot off the press. Also (and this is subtle) don't they sound slightly pleased with themselves for getting the leaflet printed in time? Do we care? No.



4. I don't care who it's supported by. I want to know WIIFM. What's In It For Me? Also, 'have given their support' is about as weak an endorsement as it is possible to get. Here is a strong endorsement: "30% of the floor space has already been snapped up by Saatchi & Saatchi - and that's *before* we even announced the dates!" But some old pals at the 'Direct Marketing Association' lending 'their support?' Do me a favour!

5. The third paragraph is a joke. And what a weak word 'incredible' is, in this context. Incredible means: lacking in credibility, unbelievable, difficult to believe! And they are right - we know it's a lie. The floor plan has only just been drawn up and they've just started their marketing, so how can the interest be 'incredible' (meaning 'overwhelming', to the copywriter.)?

6. The way the final paragraph is worded makes the welcome sound conditional ("*maybe* even welcoming you").

7. **There are no benefits to the reader in this letter whatsoever**, it is purely features and me, me, me; instead of you, you, you. I defy you to find one single customer benefit in this letter.

8. They can't know much about marketing if they send out a letter like this!

9. It's an impersonal business letter, like the previous example, it does not read like the writer is talking to me and it is signed 'Yours sincerely' with an illegible scrawl.

Truly one for the 'Terrible Sales Letter Hall of Fame.'

Bad Copy #3 The Times

[Big Logo]

Mrs Jones
123 New Street
Any Town (Etc.)

Dear Mrs Jones,

Have you seen The Times recently? If you pick up a copy you might discover a few things between the pages you wouldn't expect.

There are of course, certain aspects of our newspaper we would never change. Our high standard of journalism, for example, still prevails. But the type of writers who now contribute to The Times and The Sunday Times, allows us to deliver a view of the world which may surprise you.

Take a look at Will Self's vision of ordinary and extraordinary life, every Saturday. And no-one could ever accuse Matthew Parris' column of being conventional.



If you value this particular brand of journalism in a quality broadsheet - we can offer it to you 7 days a week. And you now have the opportunity to get even more enjoyment from our newspapers.

Read The Times and The Sunday Times every day for £1.50.

If you'd like to become one of our Priority Readers by subscribing, you'll get The Times and The Sunday Times every day and be given a whole range of benefits as well - for just £1.50 a week. That's less than half the news-stand price.

You only have to look at the enclosed brochure to appreciate the convenience of subscription. And as a Priority Reader, we'll give you special offers over and above the ones we publish: preferential discounts on selected books, great gardening offers and some outstanding wine offers - to name but a few.

Reply today and save £30 on a case of fine wines.

If we receive your order before 11th February you'll be able to save £30 on your choice of 12 wines from our extensive range, providing the selection you purchase costs £60 or more. Plus you will enjoy six months' free membership of The Sunday Times Wine Club.

So start to make more of the things you enjoy. Subscribe to The Times and The Sunday Times by calling us free on 0800 85 45 47 or returning the form in the brochure.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,
[Fairly legible signature]

Here are some of the many problems with this letter:

- 1.** That letter is dull. It is so boring - and pompous. My conclusion was that if their newspaper is as arduous as their letter then I don't want anything to do with it.
- 2.** No headline.
- 3.** The first question invites the answer 'yes' or 'no', both of which make you want to stop reading at that point. Are there *any* benefits in the first three paragraphs? No.
- 4.** "You might discover a few 'things' you wouldn't expect." What? Very weak. What 'things'? Why only 'might'? There is also a danger of conjuring up a ludicrous image in the reader's mind of actual 'things' stuck between the pages (half an old sandwich, a squashed bug...).
- 5.** Very brief, wishy washy descriptions of their columnists, that tell you nothing about them and provide no benefits.
- 6.** Then features. A very weak benefit 'a view of the world which might surprise you'. **So far, the only benefit they are offering is a sense of mild surprise.**



7. There is no free bonus only a special offer on wines, which some people may not want to spend £60+ on wine in order to qualify. Plus many people may not be interested in buying wine, so the bonus is lost on them. What has wine got to do with newspapers? Nothing. (It's like selling a property course and offering a free pair of binoculars as a bonus. Random.)

8. The letter ends with 'Yours sincerely' which is very formal.

9. The whole letter reads like a formal, stuffy business letter, rather than a personal invitation to become a subscriber. It is not written in a conversational style with a 'from me-to-you' impression.

10. Where's the possible headline? Paragraph five. Yes, but it needs work. As it stands, they've blown in. Read the Times for £1.50? What, per copy??? Per day? Per week? This isn't clear. Clarified, this could be used as a headline.

So you can see that good copy is quite rare and that the marketing departments of some quite serious companies are capable of turning out some really dreadful stuff.

To make certain you make a success with your sales letters, here is more insider information and some of what you already know but is important to remember so you can create your own strong sales material.

What are the Components of Direct Mail?

Running a direct mail business consists of successfully carrying out the following seven steps:

1. Sourcing/creating a product.
2. Writing a successful sales letter.
3. Sourcing a suitable list.
4. Testing your list.
5. Rolling out.
6. Receiving your orders.
7. Fulfilling these orders.

There's nothing in that list to keep you lying awake at night worrying! In fact I've covered some of this already. The product, for example. I've also covered copywriting. Everything I've said about the web copy applies here too, so go back and read that section.

Have a go at the sales copy yourself. Write like you talk, don't try to write 'proper English'.

Can't face it? Go to Google or Elance and type in 'Direct Response Copywriter' and hire yourself a top gun!



Direct mail is beautifully simple, which is why anybody can get into it. Let us look at these areas in a little more detail:

Targeting Your Marketing

As you already know, trying to sell to everybody is impossible, so what you must do is to **target your product at a particular niche in the market**. It's easier than you think to find your niche; you study the marketplace to find out the kind of things that are hot sellers at the moment and then source a product or produce an information product, or both, that fits this market.

However, the *narrower* your niche the *smaller* your audience, **so you want to sell products that will still appeal to a reasonable percentage of the population**. For instance, **ideally your product should appeal to both men and women**; if it were only targeted at say women, you would instantly have lost 50% of your potential customers.

There's no point in targeting a niche which consists of only ten people! Once you've sold to all ten, you're dead!

You must provide good quality products, if you don't, you'll get complaints and your customers will demand refunds, and in my opinion you will deserve it. Unhappy customers will not buy from you again and **repeat custom is what makes you rich in this business**. Also, it is far easier and a lot cheaper (because you don't have to rent a list, or take out an advert in the press) to **sell to existing customers than it is to gain new ones**.

If you think you can get away with selling poor merchandise then this business is not for you. In fact, abandon all hope of ever running a successful business of any kind, or creating wealth.

Honesty and integrity are vitally important - particularly in direct mail which has a slightly tarnished reputation.

You can now purchase almost anything through the post. However, in general, you may find it less hassle to sell products that are fairly light, inexpensive to package and post, non-fragile and do not have moving parts. Apart from the astonishing margins, that's what makes information products so great.

Information products do not have the same easily quantifiable value that limits the price you can charge for other products like electrical goods, clothes etc.

Most people would balk at paying more for a TV or pair of shoes via mail-order than they could get in any shop. This does not apply to information products. You can sell 36 page manuals for £57, thicker ones with a couple of CDs thrown in for £197 and courses consisting of 10 lessons, each of about 24 pages long for £300+! And people are happy to pay these prices.



2. Writing the Sales Letter

If you don't fancy this yourself, then you will be finding someone to do this for you. **But you should at least understand the basics of what constitutes a good sales letter** and so I although I have gone this already, here is a summary including some more top tips.

The sales letter (called copy) is made up of four important elements: (i) the headline, (ii) the body copy, (iii) the offer, and (iv) the order form. I will now have a brief look at each, because I have already explained some of these points:

(i) Headlines

Headlines are considered to be the most important part of any direct mail copy (or mail-order advert or web advert) that you will write, because it's the first thing your prospective customers will see and so **it has to grab their attention**. The headline is like the tasty bait that gets readers hooked into reading the **body copy**.

90% of the success of your direct mail letter or advert is down to the headline. If your headline doesn't **command attention** and force them to read on, then you've lost 90% of your potential customers before you've even started.

Here's a couple of examples of headlines:

How You Can Give Up Your Job and Make a Million Pounds Instead!

I Nearly Gave Up In Despair. I Honestly Thought Joey Would Never Talk – That Somehow I'd Been Landed a Dud. But All That Was to Change After I Heard About a Remarkable Man And His Amazing Technique...

It may surprise you to know that if you go over a certain word limit in your headline your sales letter or web site is almost guaranteed to fail, no matter how good the headline and body copy.

These seemingly little things can make the difference between a super successful headline that gives you so many orders you can't open your front door; to ones that do moderately okay, down to those that fail miserably.

(ii) Body Copy



As with headlines there are a lot of rules for writing successful copy and like most rules they can be broken, but not until you've mastered the basics. Until then you would be wise to follow my guidelines.

Benefits, not features are the vital components of good copy. As I mentioned earlier, people act on emotion and then back up their decision using logic.

Good copy should therefore stir powerful feelings in your readers: anger, guilt, fear, greed, pride are all provocative and can be used to your advantage.

Your copy should lead with benefits and then follow with some features to satisfy the customer's logical decision and give you and your product credibility.

For example, pretend you were selling a car, the features would be its twin cam engine and ABS, these inform your customer's logical brain that it's a great car and worth buying. They act to justify his or her buying decision. The benefits that you would weave into the copy, would be how good he/she would feel whilst driving it and how they'd be the envy of all their friends. Notice the emotions attached to this?

Body copy should be written in an informal 'me to you' style.

(iii) The Offer

The greatest copy in the world will not sell a product if the offer is no good. An example of a bad offer would be: "Genuine £10 notes - yours for only £20 plus P&P". I think you'll agree that nothing will save that offer - you would get a zero response.

So, no matter how good your sales copy, the offer has to be sizzling - a great product at a super price, plus some extra goodies to tempt them to order. The purpose of the goodies is to increase your response rate and is usually a free gift that is related to the product you're selling. The gift must be worth something. Never use a failed product as part of your offer. Bear this golden rule in mind: **if you can't sell it, you can't give it away either.**

Other incentives include free reports or a price reduction for responding early. This latter is known as a 'speed premium' in the trade.

(iv) The Order Form

It's essential that your order form is easy to fill out, clear and logical. You must tell the reader precisely what it is they need to do and lead them step-by-step through the process. People often fall down on their order form by making it too complicated to fill-in and so lose a lot of orders as a result. A useful thing to do after you have created your order form is to **fill it out yourself** and preferably get a friend to do the same, that way you get a feel for its simplicity (or not).



Overcoming People's Resistance to Your Sales Letter

If your letter looks like junk mail it will often be ditched, unopened, into the waste bin. However, your mailshot might not look like junk mail; it may appear to be a personal letter and that way it won't get binned. Everybody loves to receive proper letters and if your letter doesn't shout 'junk mail' on the envelope, people will assume it is a letter of enough importance to be opened and that's what you want.

Once opened, your letter needs to be read. If it's not, a potential sale is lost.

I know this sounds obvious, but few people will read a mailing which doesn't immediately grab their attention and so yours needs to catch their eye. And it doesn't matter how great your product is if you don't get a fair shot at telling them about it. So it's important your mailing looks like an honest-to-goodness letter. Loads of bumph not falling out onto the floor when they open it, and a big, compelling headline on the first page will ensure they go on to read the body copy. **This will be coupled with a superb offer and an order form that is simple to fill in.**

How to Improve Your Copy-writing Skills

At the very least, it is vitally important that you know a good sales letter when you see one, otherwise your tame copywriter will be able to pass anything off to you and you won't know the difference.

So I want you to start saving your 'junk mail'. In other words, other attempts to get you to part with your hard-earned wages, and that you would normally sort unopened straight into the waste paper bin. Instead, you should keep these in a folder.

Even better, have two folders. One for what you think is good copy, and the other for poor copy. An easy way to distinguish good from bad copy is that when you opened the letter you felt compelled to read the body copy after seeing the headline, then enjoyed perusing the contents. Bad copy is obvious; it's often boring to read and stirs-up no emotions in you.

This is a useful exercise to do as you can improve your own copy writing skills by reading other people's, and get some effective ideas for your own letters too. This is a trick used by the best copywriters and is a good habit to take on.

All good copywriters keep a 'swipe file' - this contains examples of great copy which they can raid for ideas if inspiration is lacking!

By the way, on no account should you plagiarise (steal) someone else's copy; not only is it dishonest but it is also illegal. Once you have contacts in the business, you can always seek to use some of their work in return for some of



yours. This can work really well, because every writer has different experiences they can bring to a subject. A course, like 'Direct Response Millions' which contains insider secrets and tips from several millionaires, gives the readers much more information than one writer could give. In other words, the readers benefit from this arrangement, because they get better value.

When you have collected enough examples, go through and try and pinpoint what it is about each letter that made you like it or not. Were the headlines eye-catching and the copy interesting to read? Did the contents make you feel the company was honest, or did their offer come across as shady or inflated? Were their claims credible? These are just some of the aspects that make great copy and this exercise will help you to identify them.

3. Sourcing a List

Who do you send these letters to? Where do you get their names and addresses?

Your mailings will go to names and addresses of people from a 'mailing list'.

A typical list is a compilation of customers who have previously bought a similar product from another mail-order company.

You will 'rent' these names and addresses for your own mailings. The rental allows you one-time use of that list. If you want to use it again, you can, but you must pay the same fee again.

Where do you rent them?

Finding a suitable list is easier than you might think, because there are people in the world whose sole business is to compile, market and rent such lists. They're called **list brokers**. They handle lists on behalf of their clients and retain a percentage (e.g. 10%) of the rental money. Having a good list broker can be your ticket to making your fortune, a bad one on the other hand can result in you losing a lot of money.

Here's why.

Pretend for the moment (if you have to pretend!) that you hate garden gnomes. You receive a mailshot for glow-in-the-dark garden gnomes that light up and sing a catchy little 'gnome song' when night-time descends. Would you part with your money? Not a chance. Yet it's an original product not available anywhere in the shops (I can't think why...). And if most of the people on this list have a similar aversion to gnomes then the company are not going to take many orders. **So a bad list (for this product) results in almost zero sales.**



Where do you find a suitable List Broker and a 'list of lists'? Simple. **Go to <http://www.ladsonhouse.co.uk/>**

This company produce a directory of all the mailing lists available in the UK, broken down by category. Interested in doll collecting? Chiropractic? Health and beauty? Money Making? It's all here. Millions of names and all (this is important) mail order responsive. They've bought from mail order before.

Even better, they've bought similar products to yours before!

Your mailshots should always be targeted at audiences who have bought similar products through the post before, as these are the people most likely to respond.

You have to be careful when selecting a list. Here's why.

Supposing you were trying to sell the gnomes I mentioned above and the broker offered you 10,000 recent names of people who have just spent £39.95 on a mail-order product. Sounds good? They're new, they're hot and they buy through the post. Worth a try? It depends. Supposing (after you have mailed) the broker tells you that they all live in high-rise tower blocks? Oops! No gardens there! What are your sales going to be? Close to zero...

A great list is a direct marketer's most treasured resource. The very best list is usually your own that you've built up through successful sales. Although it is unlikely that you'll have such an asset of your own to begin with, you will soon start to build one. Each customer you sell to is 'yours' to be added to your own in-house list.

4. Testing Your List

Direct mail is the only business I know of where you can **test your product, your market and your offer at the same time.** You perform a test by mailing to a portion of the list, say 3,000 names or 500 if you're on a low budget. From the number of replies you receive you can determine how successful your mailshot was, and how well it is likely to perform on the 'roll out'. The 'roll out' is where you mail to a large percentage of the list, having first tested a small percentage.

What is a profitable return? You only need a small percentage (between 2% and 5% - greater than 5% is extremely rare) of the whole test number to respond for your mailshot to be profitable. Obviously this depends on your product and margins.

Testing also enables you to estimate the profitability of the roll-out mailing *prior* to spending a lot of time and money on it. For example: say you had an idea for a newsletter. You would only write the first few issues (there's no need to write more than this until you know you're on to a winner), and then do



a small test to determine if enough people are interested. If they are, you roll out; if they aren't you cut your (minimal) losses and move onto your next project.

The beauty of direct mail is that should your product fail, you have risked very little and with only a small expenditure to mail the test names. Production time (if it was an information product you were selling), can be reduced by only writing the first three parts of say a course and printing 10 of each on your laser printer.

During my researches I discovered that ALL of the top mail-order gurus have come up with products that have bombed. Having failures is a fact of life and is nothing to be scared or ashamed of. You should even see them as an advantage because you learn so much more from them.

5. Rolling Out

'Rolling out' simply means mailing your letter to a larger section of the list, of which you've only tested a small sample. Only a fool with money to burn would mail out 50,000 names straight off, with no idea whether the list is going to bomb or the mailing needs some changes doing to it. But let's say you had a good response to your test in the above example; you would proceed to roll-out (mail more of the names on the list) and make lots of money!

When you rent a list from a broker, you get the names and addresses printed onto self-adhesive labels which you can then peel off and stick on your envelopes. You have to pay him/her for them of course - list brokers have to make a living as well! For your information, the cost is about 10-15p per name depending on the quality of the name (millionaires at their home addresses would set you back a bit more!)

The broker will also supply these to you on disk or by email, if that's what you want. When starting out, you usually go for the labels option, but rapidly move to the disk or email option. Why? As you build a customer base, you need to de-duplicate your existing list of customers against these rented lists. The reason is to avoid mailing your customers with an offer they have already responded to.

6. Receiving Your Orders

One of the magical, wonderful things I like best about direct mail is that people send you the money *first* before they receive the product! However, you must process all orders quickly and efficiently, people (quite rightly in my opinion) get very annoyed if they don't receive their order promptly.

Whilst on the subject of credit cards - the wide use of credit cards are a real boon to the Home Information business. All your customer has to do is pick up the phone, dial your number and order the product he or she wants. This process involves the two important keys to the growth and success of direct



marketing - spontaneity and ease of purchase. Most people buy on impulse and your business having a credit card hotline allows them to do this.

Not having a credit card hotline and being unable to take credit cards can cost you dear in lost sales. One way to get credit card facilities is to have a great relationship with your bank - it is they who will smooth the path for you. Don't panic if this isn't your situation! If you haven't got such a relationship, consider using a fulfilment house to handle your orders for you. They'll charge a fee, but it's worth it to avoid the hassle. Nowadays I do all of my direct mail handling through a fulfilment house. Failing that, it is certainly possible to run a direct response business without this facility.

There is also Paypal and a company called CardSave (<http://www.cardsave.net/>) where almost anyone can get credit card facilities!

The most thrilling part of direct mail is the period between sending out the promotion (or placing the advert) and receiving the orders. It can be both worrying and thrilling at the same time. Eventually those first envelopes arrive. Often the first to arrive are the returns ("Gone Away", "Mr Jones died five years ago") and those not interested ("Please don't send any more of this tripe to my address!") but then the orders start to come in and you quickly build a picture of how the mailing has done.

A rule of thumb: you have had 50% of the response on the tenth day after mailing (assuming normal post). In other words, if you get 60 replies in the first ten days, the final count will be around the 120 mark.

7. Fulfilling Orders

Time for a quick recap. You've brought the product to their attention either through direct mail, email, small adverts and/or web site; your copy has made them realise that they cannot possibly live without it. You made it easy for them to order with a simple order form and so now all you need to do is to ensure that the goods are in their hands within a few days of them placing their order. **The result: a winning transaction - you're happy and they're happy.**

To fulfil orders, you print-off all the orders onto address labels, pack each product individually, stick the correct label onto it, and then ship it. **Ideally you should send the product out the same day that you receive the order.** You can do all this yourself when you start out and later employ a fulfilment house to do it all for you.

Fortunately we have a reliable postal service in this country, as this is vital to the smooth operation of your company. It means your direct mail letters will be delivered, the safe receipt of all orders, and your customers getting the products you've sent out. I know this sounds obvious but think what a shambles your business would be if this were not the case.



The availability of next day delivery is just as important. We live in an immediacy society - people want their goods now, certainly not in a few weeks time - and tests have shown that when you include the words 'Next day delivery upon request', your orders can go up substantially.

Only Two More Lessons to Go!

I am hoping that you are already starting to get excited about running your own direct response business. I enjoy a comfortable millionaire lifestyle with plenty of free time and (more importantly) **plenty of money to enjoy it with**. I work a LOT less hard than I did as a wage slave and there's no comparison between the sort of light, fun work I do now, and that daily grind. I look back on that now with a shudder.

One thing I really do know is that YOU could do this too. If I were an English professor or an intellectual whiz then maybe you would think you couldn't do it. But hey, come on, I'm not that person and if I can do this, you can.

Isn't it about time YOU enjoyed a millionaire lifestyle instead of slaving away as you probably are at the moment? It's YOU who can carve a brilliant new life for yourself and the family. It's YOU who could be living in the 6-bedroom house in a leafy suburb and with one or two tasty top-of-the-range cars on the drive.

You could be helping out your family and friends if you want to, or taking five-star holidays in the world's top locations (the sort of places the stars stay at).

You could have a wardrobe full of designer clothes and a classy watch on your wrist.

And I guess the most important thing of all is that YOU could be the one who NEVER HAS TO WORK AGAIN AS LONG AS YOU LIVE!

This really is possible if you take what I am disclosing in this twelve part course and build upon it with your own researches and effort.

Above all, please don't just put this course to one side and think something like: "That was great. I'm really going to do that... one day."

Instead, grab a piece of paper and pen and write down at least ONE THING that really appeals to you from all of the information you have read so far. This will get you started on the road to a successful career as a direct response marketer.

Don't put this off until tomorrow.



Do it now! And when you have finished reading the last two parts, lessons eleven and twelve, you will have everything you need to decide on what you are going to sell, who will buy it and how to reach those buyers.

The great thing about this business is that you need hardly do any of the work yourself – if you don't want to!

Other people can write your sales materials.

Other people can have put your product together (written it up).

Other people can design the covers, CD printing and so on.

Other people can produce your product after you've done the first small run at home.

Other people can do the mailing for you.

Other people (fulfilment houses) can handle all the order taking, shipping and customer queries – if that's the route you want to go.

All you do is **bank the money** (you can even have that done for you if it's too much of a chore!).

It really is the most amazingly simple and super-profitable idea I have ever come across and now there's so much more with the Internet. I've proved that!

Don't be put off by the detail in this course. It took me a while to 'get it' so be prepared to read the last two lessons and then the whole course a couple more times to let the ideas really sink in. After all, **we're talking about your total financial freedom – FOREVER!** That's worth a little effort, don't you think?

So come on in! The water's warm and the beach is almost deserted. **It's about time you cut yourself a better break and aimed for a more fulfilling, wealthy life.** That's what I did. That's what you can do too. See you next month.

Cameron Fulton