

# Direct Response Millions

## LESSON TWO

by

Vince Stirling

**The Easy Way to Become a Top-Gun Copywriter and Make  
£100k+ a Year From Anywhere in the World!**

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Welcome to lesson 2 of your copywriting course. In this lesson we're going to look at how to write killer copy.

## **Seven Rules for Writing Convincing Copy**

Your emotional state will impact your ability to write great copy. How good you feel will reflect the quality of your copy. If you feel down, you will struggle over the writing and the final result will lack sparkle.

Ideally you would only write when you are happy, but synchronising your writing with feeling happy can be pretty difficult, so second best is to be able to get yourself into any emotional state at will.

Follow the five rules below and you will discover an essential key to your success.

### **Rule One - Clear Your Mind**

You can achieve this in many ways. Find the one that works for you best. Try lying down for a few minutes to relax. If you're feeling sluggish, some form of energetic exercise will get the circulation going and pump extra oxygen to your brain.

### **Rule Two - Get into a Positive Mental State**

If you have something bothering you and it's affecting your concentration or creativity, stop writing until you have sorted out the cause of your preoccupation. Sometimes an affirmation can help.

Stand up straight, hold your head high, look up and put a big grin on your face. Studies with clinically depressed people have shown that smiling makes you feel better. Still in this exact posture, shout out loud in an enthusiastic voice: "I feel terrific!" three times and after each time add "yes!" on the end. Repeat this process with the affirmation "I am a creative genius!" and again add "yes!" on the end the three times you say it.

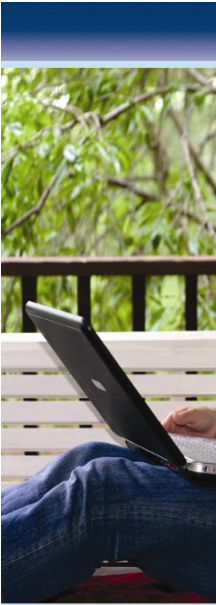
**You will be pleasantly surprised at how good you feel.**

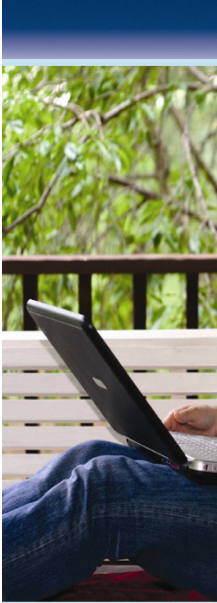
### **Rule Three - Never Write When You Are Tired**

Fatigue will drain your creative energy. You wouldn't operate machinery or drive when you're feeling tired, so don't try and write. If lack of sleep is the cause then sleep will be the best antidote.

### **Rule Four - Never Write When You Are Busy**

You won't be able to write great copy if you're clock-watching. Don't start writing until after you have fulfilled any appointments or have tended to other demands that may be pressing on you.





## Rule Five - Don't Write in Bits and Pieces

If you ever have writer's block or are procrastinating, then sit down at your PC and promise yourself that you will write just one page before you get up again. This is a sneaky technique for overcoming both these common handicaps.

Even if the first two pages you write are complete and utter drivel, it doesn't matter, writing will get the creative juices flowing and you can always delete or edit this stuff later.

If you have trouble getting started (which is the hardest part), committing yourself to **only one page** will get you going. When the first page is written, most people are happy to carry on. Once your creativity is switched on, writing becomes enjoyable and immensely satisfying rather than a chore, however, you do need to keep going as stopping will shut down this energy. Therefore, don't stop until you have completed the first draft, preferably not even for meals.

## Rule Six – Create Suitable Writing Conditions

Find out what conditions work best for you when writing. I like to write at home, away from the noise of the office.

Guard against any interruptions when writing; it can be infuriating to forget a great thought because the phone rings. Knowing that your thought pattern could be broken at any time can cause tension and dampen your vitality, meaning the difference between so-so copy and winning copy.

Unplug the phone or turn the volume down so that you can't hear it ringing. Having an answerphone allows you to decide when it's convenient to speak to callers.

## Rule Seven – Be Prepared

You will need to research the product before you begin writing. If it is a paper and ink product that you are going to write yourself, then you will probably know a lot about it. All the same you will still need to write down all the benefits of the product before you begin - **it is benefits that sell product**. I will give you a great technique for doing this in a little while.

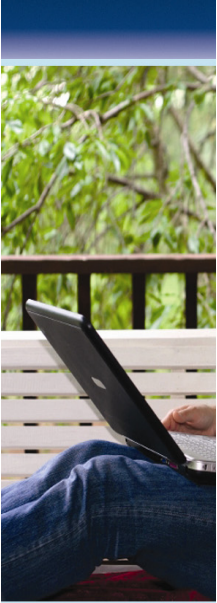
If it is a product that you have not created yourself then you will need to get to know it intimately, so that you can 'get under the skin of it' in your copy. It's the only sure way of commanding authority on the subject and convincing prospects that the product is any good.

## How to Write Good Copy

Here's the first key tip:

**Write copy from the buyer's point of view.**





You want them to be so excited about your product that they're reaching for their credit card or chequebook the second they have finished reading.

You can brainstorm the initial ideas with a colleague before you begin writing, if you like. I don't recommend more than one person writing a piece of copy though, as it's a very personal form of communication. My number one rule is: **You cannot write sales copy by committee!**

Strive to write as you would talk to a friend.

Having a trusted, honest friend read through your copy when you have finished can be a great help in weeding out any small mistakes. These can range from typos to dull, uninspiring copy. They're also able to point out important things you've omitted like your web site address for example. It's better that they tell you now, rather than having spelling mistakes in your finished draft, or worse, a failed mailshot. BUT... don't allow them to put you off. **The offer almost certainly will not appeal to them** (unless they just happen to be your target audience – unlikely) and so they are likely to be sceptical about whether it will sell or not. You're not interested in that. You want them to point out typos, errors, and glaring omissions, not their opinion on whether the copy will sell product. The bottom line is that they have zero knowledge about this.

Let the enthusiasm for your product shine through in your copywriting.

If you can't get excited about the product or service, then you can't expect other people to be motivated to buy it. Most great copywriters use and enjoy their own product, and/or are so passionate about it they can't wait to inform the whole world.

So remember this Golden Tip...Passion is the key to success!

Make a list of the elements you want to include and the benefits and features you want to emphasise.

### **How to Spark Your Creativity**

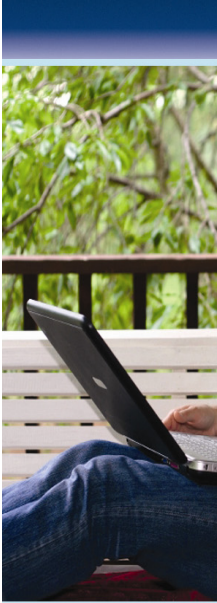
Simply start writing and don't worry about what you're putting down. You can edit later; right now you just want the ideas to flow. **Work fast and furiously**; don't bother correcting anything. Your aim is simply to get your thoughts on paper, with some emotional content and urgency. Do not, at this point, refer to your research data; that can come in later.

This first draft contains the **emotional appeal**, which is most important.

When you do your second draft, add your research data to back up your claims. I recommend you then put both drafts away for a week as this gives you time to forget, so that when you see it again you will do so with fresh eyes. When this time period is up, take out both drafts and compare them. Write a new draft that combines the best from your first two drafts.







Ideally, allow that draft to sit for another week and then rework it.

Keep the writing alive, but make it simpler by using shorter, punchier sentences!

Don't kill off the vitality. **Read your finished draft aloud**, it should read like you were talking to a best friend. Don't use complex words, you're not trying to impress your English teacher, and most people have a reading age of about 12 years old! Your copy should flow like it's a conversation and not be stilted by jerky sentences, overlong words or perfect grammar.

### **A Simple Writing Method**

Write a good sales letter and you can literally make a fortune. But if the idea of getting down to the business of learning how to do this is in any way daunting, know this...

Good sales letters from professional copywriters can cost anywhere from £3,000 to £30,000!

What I'm saying is – either learn this yourself and end up commanding fees like this, or... pay those fees yourself. The choice is easy.

Now I'm going to introduce you to a simple writing method. It's a great technique that starts you on the road to easily writing power packed sales letters.

First, write a letter from 300 to 500 words long explaining to an imaginary friend why you got involved in the best programme, product or service you have right now and why it might be something he/she would like to try. Use the language you would use to a friend. Keep it informal.

Here's what you might say:

Hey Dave! Listen, I want to get this off to you quick because I've stumbled upon a really hot way of making some extra cash and you might be able to use it. I can hardly sleep over this, honest mate you're just gonna love it..."

And here's what you definitely would NOT say...

"Dear David. I'm writing to inform you about my recent favourable interactions with a company called ACME Ltd. They offer quality, reliability and service to all of their many delighted customers and have recently won several industry awards..."

This is a deadly serious request. For your own sake, write this letter!

When you have done it, congratulations! You have just written your first piece of sales copy.





## Super Tips

For the time being, don't worry about the grammar or structure of the letter, for it's the content and presentation that's important. People get really hung up on grammar, spelling and the use of fine words. All of this is very important, I'm sure, if you want to turn out the next great novel or a text book on economics. But this 'uptight' attitude is death for writing good sales copy.

Many of the people you want to reach via direct or response mailing receive loads of offers every week, so they're not going to sit through a lengthy explanation **unless you grab them at the start**. What you do is focus on the single most important benefit the owner will enjoy from it.

But it doesn't stop there...

You've got to tell the client about the benefit in an interesting, let's say, compelling way.

Here's an example:

Say you're selling a Bread Making machine. It's the best widget available for making bread, and reduces the time required by at least one third. Here's how a poor copywriter might open the letter:

**The New ACME bread maker reduces the time it takes to make bread, bringing you greater efficiency in the kitchen.**

Here's how you might open the sales letter:

"I'll have to admit I was shocked. Two weeks after I got my ACME bread maker, I got *really* mad..."

Intriguing? You bet. The reader expects a putdown for the machine. But that's not what you're getting at.

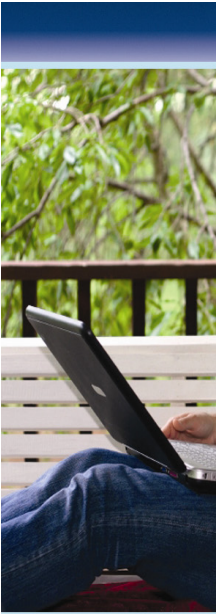
You've caught the reader off-guard, and for shock value, you'll want to put those two lines in big type at the top of your letter, but you don't want to use underlines for emphasis or it will look a little too contrived. You could use this line to open a letter to a friend or a stranger with equal effect.

Now, here's where you're taking the reader:

"At first, I was amazed that the ACME bread maker really did cut a lot of the time it takes to make bread. But when I realized how long I'd been doing it the old way, and how many chances I had to own an ACME machine, I was furious at how stubborn I had been for refusing to listen to my pals..."

Let's examine the methodology here, because it applies to any good





sales letter.

The first sentence (starting ‘At first...’) does not explain the anger mentioned in the headline sentence, so the reader has to read on to get the explanation, and the longer you can keep the reader hanging, just like a good whodunit, the more likely they’ll read to the end. It also satisfies the requirement for a good lead sentence.

**It explains the major benefit of the product, and does it in strong language.** The writer is “amazed.” The product “really did” the job. And it says nothing to the prospect about buying the product. It’s a personal “Hey, look what happened to me” story. People love to read stories.

While still using a personal example, a testimonial, which is an excellent technique in most sales letters, **the writer points out what the prospect is doing, baking bread the old way**, and points out a situation the reader has probably encountered.

Chances are good that the writer knows his prospect (he is mailing to a targeted list) and has seen the ACME bread maker many times before but still doesn’t own one.

He also hints the writer was a sceptic too (just like the reader) but now he is convinced.

**And finally, he very subtly points out why the prospect probably doesn’t own it by using himself as an example.**

He’s saying that people are basically stubborn, and no one likes to be that way. He’s presented himself as someone much like the reader; too stubborn to try new things, and angry at his mistakes when he finds his tardiness has wasted him a lot of time.

So you can see those few sentences are doing a LOT of work, right up front, early in the letter.

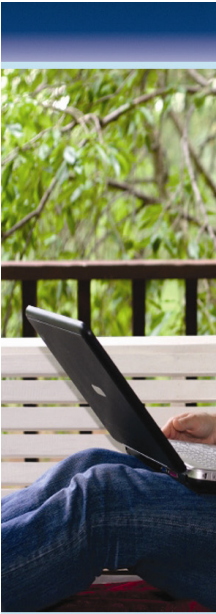
Now, the writer knows that it is a mistake not to own the product, but if he actually came out and said, “If you don’t own the ACME bread maker, you’re a fool,” he’s not going to make any friends or sell much product. Instead he criticizes himself as ‘the fool’ and allows the reader to suspect that he/she too might be a fool for missing out.

One last point is worth noting. It doesn’t take a degree in English to write such a paragraph, just a bit of thought and a whole bunch of editing and rewriting so it reads just right.

Easy reading calls for a lot of editing. As Mark Twain once famously said “I apologise for the length of this letter but I did not have time to make it shorter.”







Let's continue the letter and see where it might go, and why it may go that way:

"I'm not saying it'll do for you just what it did for me,"

**This is a soft-sell, and it works wonders.** It tells the reader what he already knows, that the product is not perfect. It's honest. It implies that the reader should see for himself how useful it will be and that he's not going to get a hard sell. **"But it's allowed me to spend a lot more time doing other things, and that's meant my life runs more efficiently and so I get more 'me' time".**

This is the benefit the reader has been waiting for. The gadget promises to give him/her more of the one commodity which is in short supply – time.

Depending on the product, it could be happiness, attractiveness, anything. **All products touch on one of these two human needs:**

1. The need to increase happiness (pleasure seeking);
2. The need to avoid unhappiness (pain avoidance).

One will always be more important than the other and **one type of happiness or unhappiness is the central focus of the sales letter as it relates to the product sold.**

The writer has led up to this benefit slowly enough so that it has built to a climax, and now the reader will either move directly to the advertising brochure, which is the whole point of this particular letter in the first place, or read this letter to the end.

### **An Effective Claim**

After the benefit, it's always a good idea to mention that the product will pay for itself over a certain period of time, if indeed it will do that and is not merely a novelty or convenience item. That's a common claim, but it's effective, because it makes the product look practically cost-free.

From here on, you detail the other benefits you've noticed that may not be in the accompanying brochure, and if you can't think of any, expand on a couple that are in that material.

As often as possible, use emotion charged words and phrases but don't overdo it or you'll come across as a cheap hustler.

Here are a few valid phrases...

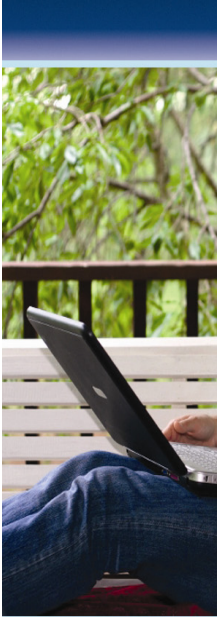
"Extremely good value"

"Built to take the absolute worst"

"Jammed with amazing ideas"

"Unforgettably satisfying"





Think in terms of the movie review quotes you see in your daily paper or on the back of a DVD cover: “Thrilled right to the very end – and then came back for more!” Those short snippets are chosen by the advertisers precisely because they excite people’s emotions and get them to the theatre or to rent the movie. Toss them into your letter at strategic points and you will hold the reader’s interest.

**Let us now look at some of the elements which go to making a class sales letter. This is just a brief overview at this point.**

### **Writing Killer Copy**

Let’s now move on to the know-how of writing killer sales letters.

### **Enthusiasm Works like Magic**

If you are excited about your product and convey that excitement in everything you write, your chances of creating a red-hot, money-producing direct mail package is multiplied many-fold. You simply cannot be too exciting in print. You can, however, be too boring, as most marketing attempts are.

There are only 5 primary reasons people will not buy what you offer:

1. They don’t want it.
2. They can’t afford it.
3. They think your price is too high.
4. They don’t believe or trust you.
5. They are not significantly excited about your offer, and thereby they are not motivated to act now.

With the exception of “don’t want it” or truthfully “can’t afford it,” great copy can overcome all other objections. Great copy starts and continues with enthusiasm.

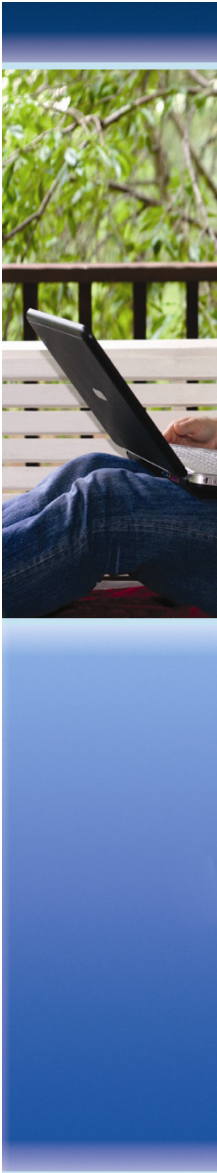
Your sales letters, circulars and brochures should read like a “rave review” spiced with every imaginable type of benefit (big and small) to your reader.

### **Passion in Print is Profit in Your Pocket!**

If you’re not gung-ho, 100% turned on by your products, why should anyone else be? “Passion in print” is the essence of masterful copywriting. Regardless of who you’re writing to - lawyers or labourers - you better put excitement and passion into your copy because passion sells!

Another secret of writing compelling copy is to write far more than you need. The more copy you write, the better.





Start with your facts and features.

Next, turn all those facts and features into benefits.

Then determine how much copy you have room for and begin the editing process. First, you write down every imaginable benefit. Next, keep the biggest and best benefits.

Great copy separates the winners from the losers in direct response (mail order) marketing. I don't care how good your service, widget, book, etc. is, it takes super copywriting to get stuff sold.

You can learn to write good copy, but first you must have a burning desire plus the persistence to stick with it. **Not all business people need to become great copywriters.**

Your time may be better used in strategic planning, product development, media buying, customer relations, etc. That's a decision that you must make.

One thing is certain: To be successful in this business, you (or someone in your organisation) must learn to consistently turn out order-pulling copy. Or you must hire a free-lance master to do it for you.

**TIP: Don't waste your precious time and money with local advertising agencies.** 99 out of 100 of these guys and gals don't know beans about what it takes to prepare winning direct mail pieces.

I could easily fill a large book on how hundreds of direct response entrepreneurs have wasted millions of pounds on the bad advice and weak copy churned out by agency types. Let these "creative types" write their clever general print adverts or radio and TV commercials for their local accounts. Keep your back pocket buttoned.

## More great insider tips:

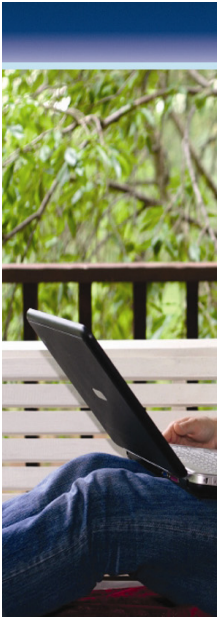
### Reveal a Minor Flaw

Include a minor flaw in your copy as this is an effective way of adding credibility. For example, "If you're looking for pretty booklets with clever graphic design, don't bother, but if you're looking for solid no-nonsense advice then this course is the one for you."

Here is the minor flaw used in Stuart Goldsmith's copy to sell David Fairweather's 'Racing For Cash' (a course about betting on horses):

"Using my method, you will not 'Get Rich Quick' - I guarantee that (as the manuals say!) In fact, it is difficult to make more than £20,000.00 maximum every year. In five years of doing this, I have never made more than £17,000.00 cash in any one year - that was my best year. That's why I say £12,000.00 is the average.





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."

That has a lot of credibility, I feel.

## Let Honesty Be Seen

Another thing that's been bandied about and discussed from every direction for years is whether to use a post office box number or your street address.

Generally, it's best to include both your post office box number (if you have one) AND a street address on your sales letter.

This kind of open display of your honesty will give you credibility and dispel the thought of you being just another "fly-by-night" mail order company in the mind of the prospect.

If you are just starting out you may be nervous about using your home address. There are two points here. Firstly, people rarely, if ever, come knocking on your door. Secondly, if this concerns you, then use the address of an office service company.

In the UK you can also buy something called a Business Response Licence from the Post Office. This allows you to have a FREEPOST address which is not your street address. This has the advantage of making you look professional and also protecting your privacy – something a P O Box does not achieve.

## The Role of the Sales Letter

To make money with direct mail, know that your sales letter is the most important component in your direct mail package. So, if you had any difficulties writing the sales letter for the exercise earlier, these may have been the reasons...

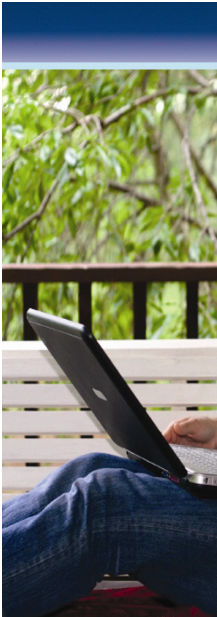
### First Things First

Before you begin writing your direct mail letter, you must know:

- Your target market - who you want to reach.
- What appeal is most likely to motivate your potential clients? (What do they want? What do they yearn for?)
- The most important benefits of your product or service.







- Exactly what action you want your reader to take (write for more information, call, send in the order, come to you, etc.).
- Your budget.
- Your competition and what they are promoting.
- If you're selling via direct mail: What mailing list to use. The list you use is very important. Your good sales letter must go to a responsive audience. You can't sell garden gnomes to flat dwellers.

If you don't yet know the answer to just one of those questions you can understand how it makes writing a sales letter difficult. It would be the same as making a meal without one of the main ingredients.

Okay I've given you an overview, let's now break it down step by step. Here's what you need to do if you're going to turn out powerful, result-getting copy:

## **34 Sure-Fire Steps to Writing a Powerful Sales Letter**

### **Step One - Know Your Facts.**

Before you begin your sales letter, you need a comprehensive "Fact Sheet." Here you list every fact about your product or service. Also write down something about every single feature it offers. Write down every truth about what it is, what it does, and what every feature is about.

### **Step Two - Turn These Facts and Features into Benefits.**

**Once you know your facts and features, you must then turn them into benefits. Red-hot sales-making copy is all about big benefits.**

### **Step Three - The Biggest Benefit Should Become Your Headline.**

Your headline is the most vital component of your sales letter. The biggest benefit your service, book, or thingamajig offers is your best bet for your sales letter's and even brochure's headline.

**Hit 'em with your top benefit quickly - in the first paragraph of your letter. Never save your best shot for the end or many may never see it. Hit them hard and quickly.**

### **Step Four - Pile on the Benefits**

Take your best shot with a major benefit in the headline of your letter or very early into your sales letter.

Then keep the benefits coming! Nothing captures the attention of readers like benefits.





Everyone's favourite radio station is WIIFM – What's In It For me?

### Step Five - Make it Grab Attention

Nothing is as important as the headline and opening paragraphs in your sales letter. I will be covering headlines later, naturally.

Don't get cute. Don't try to build up to the big benefit. Go right after your reader's jugular vein, right from the start. There are exceptions but the main headline should usually state the biggest benefit.

### Step Six - Use a Strong Lead Statement

This is extremely important. You want to quickly capture your reader's attention. If you don't succeed in doing this, they may toss your letter aside after a brief glance. The best leads are (not necessarily in this order):

#### A. News

If your product or service is really newsworthy, this is a great lead. One good word to put right at the top of your first page is: **ANNOUNCING**.

#### B. How/What/Why

The classic newspaper approach.

#### C. The numbered ways

For example: **Ten ways this service/product will improve your life.**

#### D. Narrative

This approach is difficult for many to write, but a good personal interest story can capture the reader's attention. Many charity appeal letters use this approach: "It was 4 am when I awoke with a killer of an idea..."

#### E. A provocative question

This will also usually arouse curiosity and interest. One classic is: **Girls – Want Curls?**

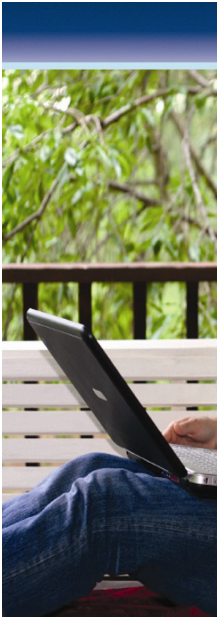
#### F. A bold statement

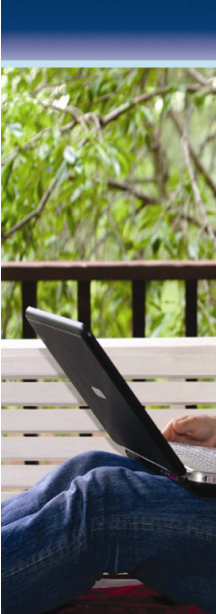
A bold, unusual or even shocking statement (make certain it's true!) will almost always get the reader involved. **83% of UK Citizens Retire Broke and Embarrassed.**

### Step Seven - Stress the Benefits

Don't waste time or words on telling your reader how great you are (although a few favourable lines about yourself/your company may be in order). Instead, promise many, many benefits - the more the better.

List the major benefits first, but follow up with minor ones. A minor benefit to you may be a major one to a reader. The smallest one may just be enough to swing the sale.





## Step Eight - Keep the Copy Tight

If you wish to present only a one-page letter, write at least two pages and then delete needless words. **You can never sell anything just from a one pager.** This is about an absolute statement as it's possible to make! You should only ever use a 1 page letter in support of a brochure if the brochure does most of the selling. There is strong evidence that a two-, three-, or four-page sales letter will outperform a one-pager even with the support of a brochure. In my opinion, without a brochure, **8 pages is the minimum length for a sales letter.**

However, the copy must be “tight” and lead the reader inexorably on from paragraph to paragraph. Nobody wants a full history of your company or your product/service.

Good advice is to write twice as much copy as you will ultimately use and then edit it down to a flowing, strong presentation. Really tight sales copy has undergone AT LEAST six full edits – often far more.

## Step Nine - You Must Make it Believable

In this age of great scepticism, your reader will stop reading your message the very second he or she becomes convinced that you are a liar. And anyway, you should *never* lie in sales copy.

First, you must lay on the great benefits. Then you must explain why it is possible to obtain the many benefits that you are offering.

The more the benefit seems too good to be true, the more you must work to convince your reader.

## Step Ten - You Should Be Specific

Generalities are for losers. Your prospects want specifics.

They are anxious to know *exactly* what your product or service offers them.

*Exactly* how much money can they make in a week, a month, or a year?

*Exactly* how much information will this computer store, *exactly* how quickly will they learn this foreign language etc?

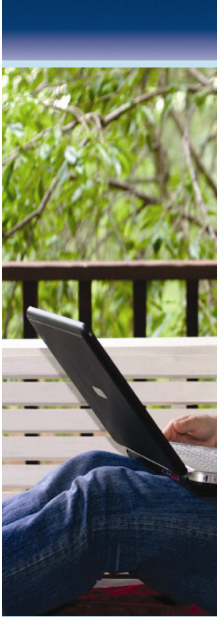
Be exact! Use times, dates, details, amounts, etc. and make it an exciting read.

## Step Eleven - Know Precisely What Your Prospect Wants

**The bad car salesman** thinks he is selling transportation.

**The average car salesman** thinks he is selling a combination of “transportation and image.”





But the excellent car salesman knows he is selling freedom and image and sex appeal!

When you know - really know - why people buy your product, you can dip below the surface and start pushing the right buttons.

This is not a 'con' by the way. It's how we all are – we buy on emotion and so in order to sell, you must appeal to emotion.

### **Step Twelve - Not Me - Always You!**

Great copy is “you copy,” not “I copy.” If your copy does not have at least twice as many you's as I's (count 'em), you're stressing too few benefits to your reader. **The reader cares not one finger-snap for you.**

### **Step Thirteen - Use Testimonials**

Folks expect you to be “high” on your own products/ services. Your claims are just that - they're your claims.

Honest-to-goodness testimonials add support to your claims. Use several believable remarks made by satisfied buyers.

Your claims are just that - they're your claims. Testimonials add substance. What others say about your book, product, or service is often more convincing than what you say. Use as many testimonials as you can obtain.

When authorised to do so, use complete names. Full names instil more buyer confidence than the use of only initials, which water down this powerful sales tool.

John Smith (Milton Keynes) is far better than J. S.

### **Step Fourteen - Use Only Photos or Artwork (if at all) that Relates to User Benefits**

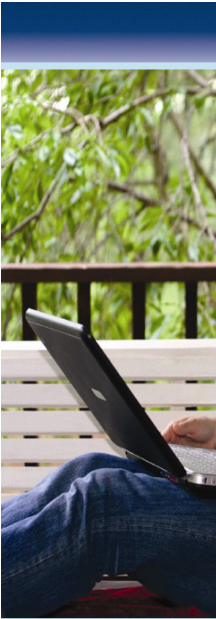
Great copy is usually far more important (in ads, flyers, or letters) than art or photos. However, an appropriate photo or illustration may enhance your offer if it relates to your copy.

One exception to this rule: A photo of a beautiful woman sometimes will “up” your response (particularly to a male audience), even if her photo doesn't relate to your copy. You only have to watch a few television adverts to see this in action.

For example...

Adverts for an aftershave usually focus on the effect it has on women - how it makes a man sexy and desirable. In other words, the advert concentrates on showing that by simply using the aftershave a man gets the gorgeous woman (or so we men like to think...). That's the benefit!





Although I believe a photo of the person making the offer can “personalise” the presentation, I also know that often photos in sales letters and brochures serve no real selling purpose.

### Step Fifteen - Use the K.I.S.S. Approach

Your potential customers aren’t stupid, but they ARE busy. So it’s best to “keep it simple, stupid.”

Good copy is easy to read and easy to understand. It uses...

- Short words
- Short sentences
- Short paragraphs

Above all else, tell your reader exactly what action you want him or her to take at the end. Don’t leave this to chance.

### Step Sixteen - Summarise Your Offer

First, you tell them what you’re going to tell them. Then you tell them. Then you tell them what you told them.

“In a moment I’m going to disclose a red-hot way of making £10,000 a month for very little effort. But first...”

“Now here’s that great money-spinning idea I mentioned earlier...”

“So to summarize, I’ve been talking about a red-hot way to make £10,000 a month for very little effort...”

It’s true: letters that concisely summarise near the end of the message almost always bring better response.

The last paragraph of your letter should briefly and concisely summarise your offer and its strongest points.

**“So, now that we are coming to a close let me quickly remind you of what you will be getting if you take up this limited offer...”**

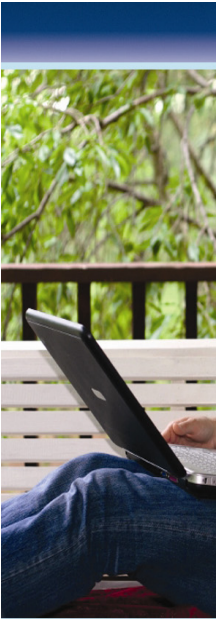
### Step Seventeen - Offer a Bonus

People like to receive an immediate incentive for taking action now. Nothing works better than offering a bonus.

I have found that a bonus will usually work better than a price reduction (although sometimes I use both!). Your special bonus need not be expensive, but it must have perceived value.

Don’t wait till the end of your letter to mention your free bonus. Mention it early, with great fanfare! Then include the benefits of your nifty bonus in your closing pitch.





The key point to remember with bonuses is this. **If you can't sell it, you shouldn't give it away.**

### Step Eighteen - Offer a Strong Guarantee

Unless your product or service is really bad (in which case, why bother to offer it?), returns/refunds will not be a major problem. So offer an anxiety-arresting, strong money-back guarantee.

Take the tension out of buying. Let your prospect know that you stand 100% behind your product or service.

Make it a no-quibble guarantee.

**If you are not totally delighted with the ACME bread maker, simply return it in any condition within 30 days of receipt for a full, no quibble refund of your money.**

A strong *guarantee of satisfaction*, or *money will be quickly refunded* is a potent sales tool. Use it wisely.


Extend your money-back guarantee to at least 30 days. Sixty days or more is even better.

A short (5, 10, or 15-day) guarantee works against you and encourages returns. The longer the guarantee the fewer returns. Plus, it builds buyer confidence.

One client of mine changed his 30-day money-back guarantee to a "One Full Year" guarantee. Result: **Returns were cut in half!**

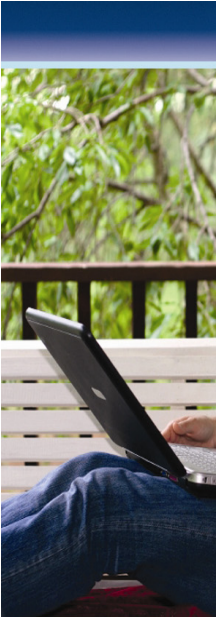
### Step Nineteen - Humour Doesn't Usually Work. Avoid It.

There rarely is anything funny or beneficial about injecting humour into a sales letter with the odd very rare exception.



If you are called on to deliver a speech or an oral sales presentation, a little humour can often work well. Not so, in most cases, with a sales letter. As I've already said, few people actually possess a decent sense of humour. I am often astonished at going to the cinema to see a comedy and noticing the stony silence at a sharp, funny piece of dialogue. But if a character farts on screen, the audience is howling with laughter or rolling in the aisles. That's about the level of most people's humour in the UK. Print is not the best medium for humour because you do not have facial expressions, tone of voice and timing to aid you – three essential tools for a stand-up comic. Anyway, what you find funny, someone else will not. One final point – humour *always* conveys an 'I'm not a serious person' impression. Obviously, that means the reader will not take you or your product/service seriously.





## Step Twenty - Reinforce Your Letter with a Flyer or Brochure

An effective attractive flyer or brochure allows you to present the benefits of your offer in another way. This is only applicable to certain products and services – particularly those with strong visual appeal. For example, you would have a brochure if you were selling swimming pools, flower seeds, pianos, garden furniture, patios and many other visual objects. You would not have a brochure if you were selling information products (manuals and books), a seminar, CDs or DVDs (unless a ‘collectible’ set) and so on.

## Step Twenty One - Personalise Your Letter

Direct mail is the personal medium, and your sales letter should make this true. A typed “personal style” letter is almost always more effective than a slick, professional-looking, typeset letter.

Don’t misunderstand me, the letter will BE typeset (to use a rather old fashioned term) - it just shouldn’t look that way. To this end, one secret of the direct mailers is to use courier typeface which has a sort of ‘typewriter’ feel to it.

This is courier typeface.

If you can personalise the salutation: “Dear Mr Jones,” this is better than “Dear Friend” or whatever. But it’s more expensive to personalise the salutation and is often impractical.

Your brochure or sales flyer should be typeset of course with the use of any appealing graphics. Just keep the letter itself looking ‘unproduced’.

## Step Twenty Two - Don’t Split Your Message

While some tell half the story in the letter and the other half in the brochure, you’ll do much better by telling the whole story, with all the benefits, in both elements assuming you have a brochure.

Keep in mind: some readers will choose to read only one.

## Step Twenty Three - Keep Sentences and Paragraphs Short

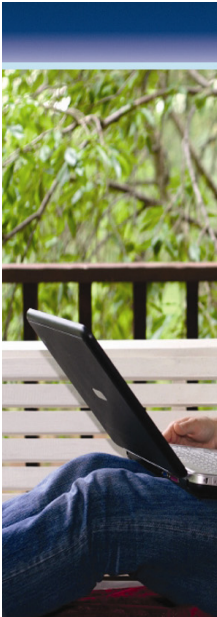
For maximum readability, keep most sentences to 12 words or less and paragraphs to no more than five or six lines. Whether it will actually take just a couple of minutes or over ten minutes to read your message, many will not get involved **unless your copy looks like a fast, easy read.**

## Step Twenty Four - Offer a “Freebie.”

This is termed a ‘bonus’ or a ‘premium’ in the trade. People love to get a little extra for free. If at all possible, offer a free bonus.

This almost always increases results. Your freebie need not be an





expensive item, but it should be something likely to appeal to the tastes or lifestyle of your readers. Remember, if you can't sell it, you shouldn't try to give it away. Information products (e.g. a page booklet, a CD) are cheap to produce but have a high perceived value.

If you offer your freebie for a fast response, it's called a 'speed premium' in the trade.

**“Order Immediately and Get Your FREE Copy of Twenty Top Money Making Businesses...”**

### **Step Twenty Five - Ask for Action**

Don't be coy about it. Let your reader know what you want him or her to do. Ask outright for them to act NOW and send in the order coupon. One good idea is to hint or mention they could miss out if they don't.

Don't "beat around the bush." In your closing paragraph, ask them for the order – you can't leave this to chance.

### **Step Twenty Six - A 'P.S.' is a Must!**

With the possible exception of your salutation and opening paragraph, a PS. will attract the strongest attention. Your PS should usually restate the headline benefit. Further PS should state other benefits. No more than 3 PS please!

**P.S. You really CAN make £10,000 a month for under an hour a day using this superb system.**

**P.P.S Remember – just 14 places left so make sure you order TODAY to ensure you get one.**

### **Step Twenty Seven - Eliminate the Risk**

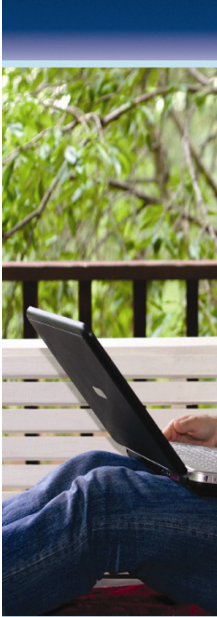
This is such a powerful tool. I'd rank it at least as high as the use of testimonials. Whenever possible, offer a strong guarantee, a free trial period, etc. A good place to inject a strong guarantee is early in your letter. Then reinforce it near the end of your letter.

**“Don't take my word for it! Try this amazing system FREE for 30 days in the comfort of your own home. If not utterly delighted and convinced, we will gladly refund your entire payment AND your postage AND send you a free gift as a 'thank you' for at least giving this system an honest try. That's how convinced we are that you're going to love this.”**

### **Step Twenty Eight - Include the Price**

If you fear including the price, it can only be because either your benefit package or guarantee may not be up to par. If your price is high, make sure you have beefed up your benefit package. The place for the price is towards the end of the letter – and don't shout it out. Here's why. Many people will





glance at page one then flip through looking for the price. If it screams at them, they will decide it is too much. Of course it is – you haven't had time to make your pitch yet!

### **Step Twenty Nine – Give a Benefit For Immediate Action**

When possible, give a *reason* for quick response. Order within the next 30 days and receive a free gift. Order before this date and receive a 10% discount, etc. Just 21 places left – hurry. Only 97 of these valuable items – order now – when they're gone, they're gone.

People love to get a little extra for their money. If at all possible, offer a free bonus. This almost always increases results.

Your “freebie” need not be an expensive item, but it should be something likely to appeal to the tastes or lifestyles of your readers. It also must relate to the item you are offering for sale.

### **Step Thirty - Make sure Everything Flows and is an Easy Read**

Before you give your letter the final okay, read over it several times. Ask others to read it. Make certain it flows well and is both interesting and informative to read. Each paragraph should flow seamlessly to the next.

Above all else, it must motivate positive action.

### **Step Thirty One - Make it Believable.**

In this age of doubt and scepticism, trust is not easily achieved. To overcome this prevailing fact, we must give good explanations why we can offer so many benefits to our customers.

Believable reasons we can offer so much good is essential if we hope to build trust. Do not make your offer “too good to believe.” Stop a little short of perfection!

Adding a small negative can achieve this. E.g. “Now I'm not saying *anyone* can do this. If you haven't got a PC then I'm sorry, you won't be able to copy my money-making idea for yourself...”

### **Step Thirty Two - Get Personal.**

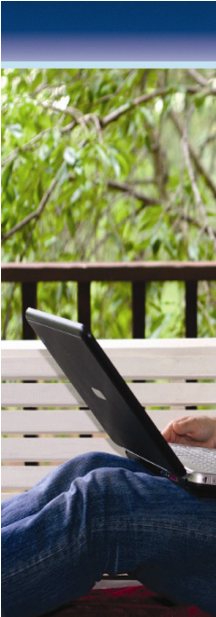
Right from the “get-go” give your letter the one-to-one approach. Think and write “you and I,” never “we.” Fill your copy with more you than I.

### **Step Thirty Three - Think Salesmanship.**

Writers are not great sales people, but a super salesperson can learn to write great copy. As you write your sales letter, brochure, etc., read it to yourself ... OUT LOUD!

A great sales letter is nothing more or less than super salesmanship in print.





## Step Thirty Four - Be Specific.

Spell out exactly what benefits are being offered. It's always more productive to state "you can make £50,000 a year with this home-based business," than to merely say, "You can make big money at home with this business opportunity."

"Look and feel 10 years younger in 90 days" is much stronger than saying, "You'll look and feel younger in a short period of time." Be exact. Use time, dates, amounts, etc.

## Checklist for Common Copy Mistakes

Go over your copy and check it against these four common mistakes:

### Mistake One - Not Doing Enough Research

Have you looked at the competition? Have you looked at the wants that your customers have and ensured that your product meets these wants?

### Mistake Two - Not Beginning the Sales Letter with the Biggest Benefit of Your Product

Some writers make the mistake of leading the copy with an argument about why the prospect needs the product being offered for sale. This is a great way to antagonise customers and disastrous for selling product.

**Ensure you meet the wants of your customers, don't try and create new ones for them that they aren't aware of.**

Try not to start your letter with a 'me' or 'I' message, particularly when starting out. This rule can be broken when you know what you are doing.

**Prospects couldn't care a jot about your company:** they want to know what's in the product for them. **If you don't tell people from the outset how the product can meet their wants, they won't bother reading and hence won't order.**

A typical 'me' message is: "ABC Engineering are proud to announce that they won the Queens' Award For Industry in 2010." Who cares? Certainly not the customer.

### Mistake Three - Not Ending the Advert or Letter by Requesting a Specific Action

You want your prospect to place an order. **You need to specifically ask for what you want,** and give your prospect instructions on how to fulfil your request. **Don't be modest.**

If your prospects have read the letter to the end, they must be interested. Tell them what to do about it. E.g. "Please fill in the enclosed coupon today, now, before the moment passes."







## **Mistake Four - Taking Too Long to Introduce the Product or Service**

**Let people know within the first eight to ten lines what you're selling.**

You don't have to detail the offer at that time, but you'll lose people if you don't tell them quickly what product you're talking about at least in approximate terms.

Practice these vital profit guidelines and you will prosper.

More next time!

