

Direct Response Millions

LESSON THREE

by

Vince Stirling

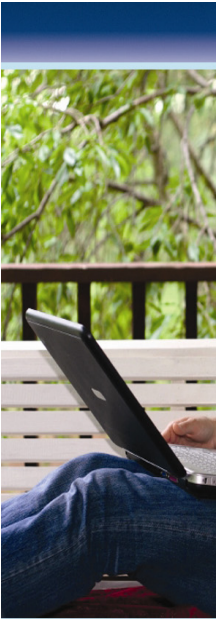
**The Easy Way to Become a Top-Gun Copywriter and Make
£100k+ a Year From Anywhere in the World!**

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Welcome back to lesson three of the course. Let's move right along with more secrets of becoming a million pound copywriter.

The Components of Killer Copy

As you know, an advert or mailshot is made up of several optional components; these are:

1. Headline
2. Photographs
3. Salutation
4. Body copy
5. The guarantee
6. Closing the sale/Asking for the order
7. Offer/free bonuses
8. Testimonials
9. Signature
10. Paper colours
11. Postscripts
12. The envelope
13. Teaser copy on the envelope (optional)
14. Order form
15. Lift letter (optional)
16. Attachments
17. Brochures

Let's take a look at the different components of copy in more detail (note you don't need *every* component in *every* sales letter):

Headlines

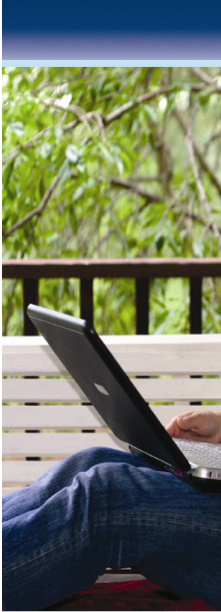
We're now going to concentrate on writing techniques for creating fantastic headlines. Headlines, as we shall see, can mean the difference between the success or failure of your advert or mailshot.

We're going to look at the importance of headlines as attention grabbers, the different types of headlines that you can use, the circumstances that best suit them and some examples of each.

Why are Headlines so Important?

The importance of having a strong headline can't be overemphasised. An effective headline does three things. First it proclaims the product's USP (Unique Selling Proposition) - it tells your readers what is so great about your product and **how they won't be able to find a product exactly like it anywhere else.**

Second, it allows people to know just from reading the headline **if this is a product that can help them.** In effect you are *qualifying* prospects for your product. You should know by now that you can't sell to everybody, **so your headline only engages those people who will benefit from your**



product. If people didn't know this from the outset, few would bother to read your sales letter at all. If in doubt, consider a headline such as, "At Last! A Cure For Arthritis!" Doesn't that immediately pre-qualify the readers as arthritis sufferers? If you don't have arthritis you won't read another word – and that's good!

Golden Insider Tip...

In effect, you are writing your headline with only your niche market in mind.

If you try and make your headline appeal to people outside of your niche you will be diluting the impact of its message. For example, say your product was a business opportunity that produced excellent returns but needed £1,000 start-up capital. If your headline appeals to prospects who are financially qualified to try your product (i.e. have the required start-up capital), then your chance of making the sale markedly increases.

The type of headline you would choose in this instance would be a headline telling the prospect about how much money they could earn. You are attracting the entrepreneurs, people who are willing to take risks and work hard for financial independence. E.g.

"£56,000 Return For a £1,000 Investment Doesn't Seem Fair."

Using a headline that concentrated instead on the lack of job security would simply attract the security-minded people, who would be less willing to take risks and invest the £1,000 start-up capital. These kind of people are less likely to have the necessary money to get involved in business. Meaning they have no savings - they've spent it!

Here is a headline NOT to use:

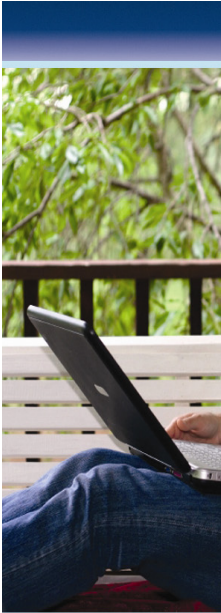
“Worried About Losing Your Job? Debts Mounting Up and Nowhere to Turn? New Investment Offers £56,000 for a £1,000 Investment!”

The headline sets the tone and scene of the mailshot. It gives the prospect an idea of what the product is about. Your body copy should follow in the same narrative style. If you change the style you will lose the reader and hence a sale. For example, if your headline has an air of suspense your body copy must maintain this.

Third, it must **grab the attention of the prospect and make them keep reading.** The attention grabbing aspect is dependent on its ability to elicit an emotional response - if it doesn't do this then it isn't working and your whole sales copy will fail.

The headline by itself won't close the sale for you. Prospects will want





to find out more about your product before they buy, but it is up to your headline to ensure they do go on to find out more and don't just bin your mailshot.

Great Headlines Can Power Boost Your Response Rate

The headline you choose for your sales letter is of greater importance than all other components combined – the body copy, guarantees, testimonials, the order coupons, etc.

Assuming you have a desirable product or service at a great price, the headline you use will be the major plus or minus factor in determining response.

A wrong or weak headline will almost always doom a sales pitch to failure, regardless of how good the product or service (or the rest of the mailing) may be.

90% of the success or failure of sales copy is down to the headline. This is because five times as many people read the headline as the body copy. Hundreds of tests confirm that a good headline can be up to 17 times more effective than a so-so headline. Plus, you will find that once you have the headline as a starting point, the rest of the copy will be easier to write.

The following quotes on headlines come from two of the legends in great advertising:

"Advice to copywriters. When you are assigned to write copy, write a lot of headlines first. Spend hours writing headlines - or days if necessary. If you happen to think of a headline while walking down the street or while riding the bus, take out pencil and paper and write it down." **John Caples**

"On the average, five times as many people read the headlines as read the body copy. It follows that, unless your headline sells your product, you have wasted 90 per cent of your money." **David Ogilvy**

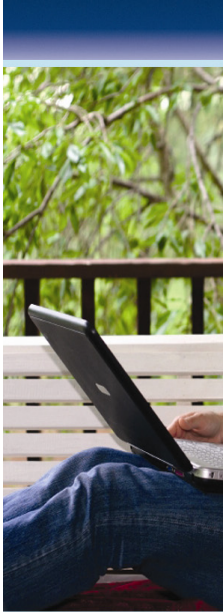
The Headline Must Appeal to the Reader's Self-Interest

A person's greatest interest is most often self-contained. People want to become winners by gaining benefits while avoiding pain and loss.

Thoughts and feelings influence more decisions on purchasing than pure intellectual considerations.

This is why an appeal to a person's emotions and desires almost always outperforms straight factual headlines. That's just how it is – I didn't write the rules!





So save your facts for later. First, grab the reader's attention with a big, emotionally appealing benefit. **Powerful sales letters begin with a sizzling self-interest headline.**

It's a battle to briefly capture the attention of your reader's mind and to lead him or her to the desired action - placing that order immediately. Do you really think it's anything less than that? Check your premise.

What Are You Trying to do?

Answer: You are trying to stop a busy person dead in his or her tracks with a bold statement that you hope greatly appeals to their self-interest. And you've got about TWO SECONDS to do it!

If you succeed, you hope to entice him or her with your subheads and opening paragraph to continue reading.

Once the entire sales letter is read, you hope you have pushed enough of his or her basic want and need buttons (success, greed, love, pleasure, survival, acknowledgement etc.) that he will get up off his backside and start hunting for his stamps and cheque book.

It takes powerful, compelling copy to achieve that response – and it starts with the headline.

The battle for the respondent's mind should not be interpreted in a negative light as one of ongoing control. You're not playing for the same stakes as some religious cults, the CIA, or KGB. You just want them to order. After that – they can have their mind back. (I'm being humorous, but you get what I am saying, I hope.)

To get temporary control however, you use an arsenal of direct response weaponry. When you think about it, it's rather amazing that mere words on a printed page can have any effect such as making someone reach for their wallet and send you money!

The Positive Approach Works Best

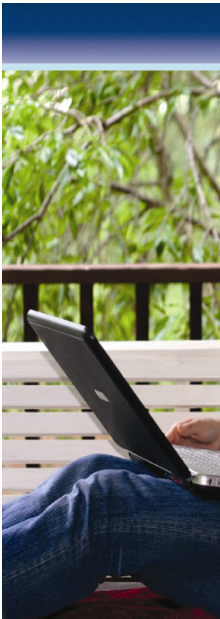
Appeals to the person's self-interest almost always work best in headlines. Make your headline shout to your readers, "Here are some big benefits for you!" This is NOT the time to keep your powder dry.

If you have real news to tell, get the news in the headline, along with the benefit.

With only a few exceptions, positive headlines work best. **Telling people how they will prosper works better than telling them how to prevent losses.**

Any negative appeal concerning possible loss by not responding to your offer can be mentioned somewhere in the body copy. Make the headline





positive for maximum results.

Many years ago I tested several “negative headlines.” Results most often were not sensational. Instead, all my smashing successes have come from positive, benefit-rich headlines.

Some Successful Headlines

Wealth, Health, Love, And Happiness - Now You Can Have It All!

This was for the book *How To Achieve Total Success*. The result was 120,000 copies in print worldwide.

Stay Home And Make Money

For a book with the same title, 47,000 copies sold and counting. Sometimes the title of a book or the name of a product also makes for a super headline.

If You Love To Catch Fish, Get Your “Bass-Buster” While We Can Still Legally Sell Them!

This was the headline for a unique fishing lure which resulted in sales of over 200,000 units.

Learn The Amazing Secrets of a Sweepstakes Millionaire

This responsive headline was for Bruce Robbins’ report that tells how to win sweepstakes and contests. It is a tremendously successful headline.

The Best New Book on Making Money by Mail is Yours Free!

This incredibly successful headline introduces the Profit Ideas books and CDs to buyers and to those who wish to go into business selling them.

Here’s a longer one:

“I’ve Tried Every ‘Money-Making’ Internet Scheme Going And I Never Made a Damn Penny From ANY Of Them – Until Now...”

I could go on and on, but I think you’re getting the idea. **Capture attention with a daring, beneficial headline.** Do this, and you’ll get the response and profits you seek. Don’t try to be clever, cute, or funny.

Simply give your readers good news in the form of a big benefit. That’s how to make your headlines sizzle and sell.





Four Ways to Write Headlines that can Make You Hundreds or Thousands of Pounds a Year!

If you can't draw your prospect in with your headline, you won't get them to read your sales letter. So, you must have a headline that grabs the reader's attention and forces them to read what you have to say.

It is fortunate for those of us in the business that headlines are so important because it just so happens that they are one of the easiest things to change and test.

If you had to constantly test different sales letters, that would take you a very long time. Sometimes it takes weeks or months to create a sales letter. But, a headline can be written in seconds.

You can literally write hundreds of headlines in a day. You can throw out the ones that don't sound right, and test only the absolute best ones.

Also, a lot of times a headline can simply be cut and pasted so that you don't even have to change the first page of your sales letter. This makes testing headlines one of the cheapest, but most effective ways to test. And, when you find a headline that is a hit, it can spell instant success for you.

Here are the four ways to write headlines that really draw the reader to your sales letter...

Writing Headlines Method One - Try to Appeal to a Prospect's Interest in Every Headline You Write.

Your headline absolutely must tell the reader that you are offering them something that they really want and need. A self-interest benefit must be offered or implied in your headline.

Whenever you write a headline, ask yourself, "How will this headline benefit the reader?" If you can't think of a way, then trash that headline and write another one!



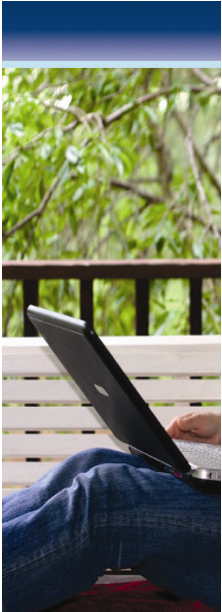
Writing Headlines Method Two - Don't Just Try to Arouse Curiosity by Itself in the Headline Statement.

In order to get the most response from your headline, you cannot just arouse curiosity in the reader. That will only do so much. **You must combine curiosity with self-interest and benefits.**

The customer knows you are trying to sell them something, so curiosity by itself is not going to make them open their wallets.

And please, avoid ridiculous teasers like: "Help! Someone's Just Eaten My Cat!"

Then the body copy says: "Now that I've got your attention, can I introduce you to our range of pre-stressed concrete lintels..."



Writing Headlines Method Three - Never Interject the Negative Side of an Offer in Your Headline.

Never use words that people could take as negative. For example, don't ever say "My plan has made a few people rich" (why just a few?) or "Some of my customers will get rich." Instead say, "My plan can make you rich!"

Overall, tell the customer what you will do for them. Use lots of "yous" in the copy. If you can, make your headline talk directly to them.

Writing Headlines Method Four - Make Your Offer a Quick and Easy Way for the Reader to Get What He or She Wants.

If you have really honestly found a way for your customer to make £1,000 a week, you need to tell them about it. But make sure your headline sounds believable. Don't stretch the truth just to get more people to read your sales letter.

"Make Ten Million Pounds a Day From Your Armchair Watching Your Favourite TV Programmes" is not a credible headline.

These four things will help you write killer headlines. Even if you don't yet have a product, you can practice writing headlines. Write about anything even if it's not your product. Make something up. By practicing, you will soon pick up on ways you can turn your headlines into sales over and over again.

For instance, pick a subject and practice writing headlines for it. Let's suppose you chose the subject of health. Here are some examples of health headlines, taken directly from the front cover of a catalogue I received in this morning's post.

These headings are all written down the left side of the page ...

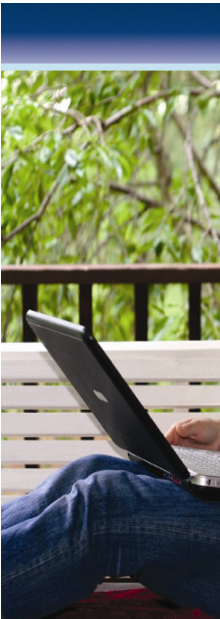
**"I'm healed at last!"
How to go from chronically
sick to suddenly healthy faster
than you thought possible.**

**Complete reversal of HEART
DISEASE in weeks. Page 7**

**CRIPPLING ARTHRITIS
REVERSED IN 14 DAYS.
Page 8**

**Dangerous HIGH
BLOOD PRESSURE
vanishes in 6 weeks.
Page 7**





HEALING DIABETES: After only 7 days, insulin is unnecessary. Page 8

On the right side of the cover, (which by the way is the side of a page most of us glance at FIRST) is a photograph of a healthy and happy looking couple in their fifties, obviously on a beach. Both are dressed in holiday casuals, with the man giving the woman a 'piggy back'. Great photo – powerful selling! It doesn't take a genius to work out who they are selling to, and what they are selling!

As you know – they are not selling a solution to health problems, so much as selling HAPPINESS, HEALTH, VITALITY AND YOUTHFULNESS. They are the triggers for the brain.

So, with this in mind, brainstorm as many headlines as you can on the subject of health. As this is a practice run, you don't need to worry about writing headlines you can't substantiate – which obviously for health products, is absolutely essential.

What Makes a Great Headline?

Don't write headlines that are humorous, cute or oblique. By oblique I mean one where only you know the meaning of it. You can often see examples of these on billboards where it will say something like "Sarah knows" and then a picture of a beach ball(!) The reader has no idea which company is behind it, or what it's trying to advertise. A rather ridiculous waste of money for the company paying for the space, but then they will have been conned by an artsy advertising agency into squandering their cash.

Humorous headlines are lethal as I have said, but will bear repeating. Few people will share your sense of humour, and if they don't find you funny, they won't order. **Remember, everyone thinks they have a sense of humour, many people don't.**

Effective headlines contain short words that create a pleasant image, picture, or sound, for example:

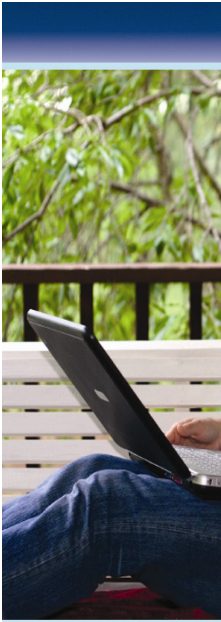
"How to Get a Standing Ovation Every Time You Make a Speech."

That's a great headline from Ted Nicholas.

The majority of the population is predominantly visual, that is, they think in images or pictures. However, if your headline can also elicit sounds and feelings, not only will it appeal to people who are more auditory or kinaesthetic, but it will also intensify the impact of your headline.

A great word to use in a headline is 'you.' The word 'you' gives the





impression of talking directly to the prospect and that the benefits you're describing are for him/her.

What to Avoid:

1. Me, I, and We;
2. Overuse of adjectives (wonderful, terrific, fantastic) and adverbs (quickly, brilliantly, superbly). They weaken your headline.

Look at the example below where the adjectives are in bold and the nouns they describe are underlined. Notice how the adjectives are redundant and detract from the impact of the headline, rather than adding to it.

"Free Special, Revealing Tax Report for All Readers"

A better headline is given below. This one is more punchy and direct:

"Free Tax Report for All Readers"

In the next example the adverbs are in bold and the verbs they give more information to are underlined:

"How to Quickly Cut Your Tax Bill"

See how the above example appears weak? A better way to say the same thing would be:

"Cut Your Tax Bill!"

Or better...

"Slash Your Tax Bill!"

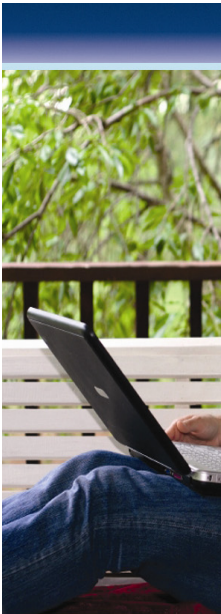
This headline contains an action verb like 'slash' to replace the 'cut' as action verbs have greater impact. Plus, removing the 'how to' in this case makes the headline more punchy.

Powerful headlines contain verbs that are colourful, vibrant and strong.

You want to be obvious, direct, and lively.

Dropping the first letter of your headline draws the reader's eye to the left and increases the chance of them reading it. Use both Upper and Lower Case letters in Headlines and Sub-heads; don't use ALL CAPITALS and never use reverse-out (white text on a black background) as these all make it harder to read. For the same reason, avoid using Sans-serif typefaces (a serif is the little foot which appears on the bottom of the letters); Times New Roman (which is what I'm using) is an excellent font to write your headline in, as it is easy on the eyes.





In contrast, this line is written in a sans-serif face (Arial) – yes, the difference is subtle, but it is definitely a little harder to read.

Put quotation marks around your headline as studies show doing this will draw 28% more attention. A fantastic way to increase sales for zero effort. They make your headline look important, as if somebody is being quoted and is therefore worth reading. And being read is the first hurdle your headline must pass over.

If you doubt this, check it out for yourself. Which looks better:

Glowing Radiant Skin In Under Ten Minutes a Day!

Glowing Radiant Skin In Under Ten Minutes a Day!

GLOWING RADIANT SKIN IN UNDER TEN MINUTES A DAY

GLOWING RADIANT SKIN IN UNDER TEN MINUTES A DAY

“Glowing Radiant Skin In Under Ten Minutes a Day!”

Hopefully it was the last one. If you disagree – you’re wrong. Sorry!

Benefits Not Features Sell Product

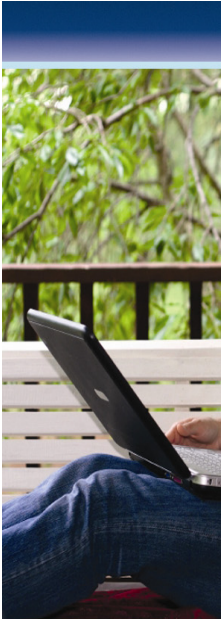
Your headline must announce the greatest benefit of your product. Benefits answer the question WIIFM (What's In It For Me?) This is what your readers are most interested in. So before you start writing your headline for a product, you will need to identify all its benefits and features. People are turned on by benefits; they are the real sales hot buttons. The best way to capture benefits is to look at the product from a buyer's point of view.

If your product is a printed product, read through it again and select all benefits to the reader from every page and write each benefit down on a 3x5 card. If your product is not a printed product, step back from it and select all the benefits and features of it and write them down on 3x5 cards. You might think you can skip this exercise, but you cannot. I do exactly this with every piece of copy I write, and yes, I do use actual 3x5 cards for this. So if I need to do it after thirty years....

The only way to get people to part with their money is by **demonstrating the benefits your product will bring to them.** Benefits must answer the question, "So what?" Rank your product's benefits from the greatest benefit all the way down to the smallest by ordering the 3x5 cards.

Here’s the process...





The most **powerful benefit** will make the **best headline** and can also be your USP (Unique Selling Proposition).

The **second strongest benefit** will make a **great sub-head**.

Your **third greatest benefit** should be the **first one you mention in the body copy**.

The **fourth best benefit** as the **second one you mention** and so on all the way down through the copy.

Put drama, power and passion into your benefits.

A simple way of creating a good headline is to look for the most obvious benefit as this can also be the best. Don't think this will look silly or lack impact. Benefits become obvious to the client only when they are pointed out to them. I give more great examples of headlines in the next couple of pages, in subjects other than health and money making.

What Are Features?

A feature is a fact about the product that helps to build credibility and aims to win over the sceptics.

Example of a feature: '237 A4 pages with 37 illustrations' are both features. Features don't have to answer the question, "So what?"

If you went on to explain, 'Its 37 illustrations enable you to see clearly step by step how to build each origami model', that becomes **a benefit, supported by a feature**.

I always write as many headlines as I possibly can. Some become 'teasers' (copy on the outer envelope, more on this later). Those that I don't test are used as bullet points in adverts and sales letters.

The Power of Hidden Benefits

Finding the hidden benefit and writing that into a headline can be even more powerful. This is a benefit that does not come from examining the product at all.

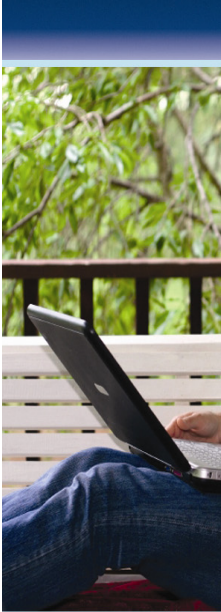
So, how do you find out what the hidden benefits are of your product or service? This is how you do it...

Step-back from your product and ask yourself: "If I had unlimited god-like powers and I could grant my prospective customer the biggest benefit I can possibly imagine he or she would want from my product, what would it be?" And then write down your answer.

Ask yourself this repeatedly until you come up with an incredibly powerful benefit.

Ted Nicholas, who originated this technique, used it to create a headline for his book 'The Complete Book of Corporate Forms'. Sounds dull doesn't it? The problem was how to dramatise the book and excite his prospects





about the benefits so that they would buy it. He was also competing against other publishers who sold legal form books, although none were as easy to use as his.

His book was aimed at entrepreneurs and when he asked himself the hidden benefit question; he realised this...

Most entrepreneurs abhor paperwork!

So he needed to convince them of the benefit from using the pre-printed template forms in the book. He knew that **entrepreneurs hated to pay taxes and what every entrepreneur wants to preserve is the corporation's tax shelter status.** No one wants to lose that precious benefit.

And so it came to him:

"What Will You Do When the IRS Suddenly Wipes Out Your Corporation's Tax Shelter Benefits?"

Whilst the book mentions the importance of keeping good records to maintain the corporate protection, there is no reference in the book to the IRS taking away benefits, although it happens on a frequent basis. This is why Ted called it the hidden benefit. This headline was used successfully in a space advert, a sales letter and card decks.

If you're still not convinced that headlines can make or break your sales pitch, take a look at this.

Since 1979 Ted Nicholas has sold more than 350,000 copies of this book alone. At \$70 a copy, that's 24.5 million dollars!

Here's another headline he created using this method:

'The Eighth Wonder of the World'

Of all things, the subject of the book is compound interest. An important subject but again, hardly exciting enough to get you gagging to buy, is it? That is if the title was, 'Compound Interest' rather than 'The Eighth Wonder of the World.'

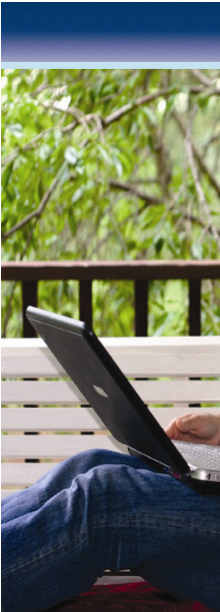
And the most profitable headline he ever wrote for his book 'How To Form Your Own Corporation Without A Lawyer For Under \$75' was:

'The Ultimate Tax Shelter'

Another successful headline for this book using this same method was:

'Wage Your Own Personal Tax Revolt.'





How Adding One Single Letter Tripled the Response Rate of Sales Copy

To give you an idea of how important getting the words right in your headline is, I'm going to tell you about how Dan Kennedy nearly tripled the response to his advert in a magazine simply by changing one letter.

The headline he used before he changed it was:

"Put Music in Your Life"

And this is what it said after he added that one letter:

"Puts Music in Your Life"

Question: why should one 's' triple the response rate? Answer: people are lazy and would rather have things done for them. The first headline implies that the reader has to do something in order to get the benefit; the second headline suggests that this isn't necessary - it is done for them.

This applies equally to headlines in sales letters.

Writing Pre-headlines and Sub-headlines

The sub-heading is the text which appears immediately below the headline. It is optional, but commonly used.

One direct marketing guru prepared a direct mail package for a client selling a book entitled *How to Fight Cancer and Win* by William Fischer. He read through the book and wrote down all the benefits on 3x5 cards. He put the page number next to each benefit so that he could quote them in the copy. Credibility, drama and curiosity are all increased when you cite the page number. For example:

The 7 Things You MUST Do Before You Start (page 27)

When he discovered the section that described how a famous doctor found a natural cure for cancer that was scientifically proven by incorporating two natural foods in your diet, he knew he had the 'grabber'. He then wrote several headlines centred on this theme. He felt the following was the strongest:

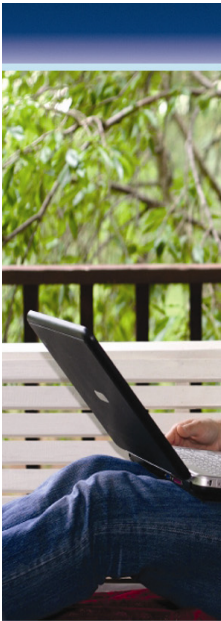
"You Can Prevent Cancer Simply By Eating Two Natural Foods"

He then wrote a **pre-headline**:

World renowned doctor says...

Having this pre-headline gave his headline credibility. Something as





controversial as this needed to be backed-up with lots of proof. Establishing credibility is always the biggest challenge you will face when selling, particularly with health products.

The next task was to create a sub-headline that was good enough to stand as a headline by itself. To be most effective, your sub-head should tie into the headline. The world renowned doctor in Ted's pre-headline was a Dr Budwig, who is mentioned in the book, and his impressive credentials became the **sub-head**:

"Seven times Nobel award nominated doctor shows how certain natural foods and nutrients actually prevent and cure cancer. Leading medical doctors endorse her breakthrough findings."

As a **second sub-head** he quoted Hippocrates. Perhaps the best known doctor in history. Doctors must recite the Hippocratic Oath before they can practice medicine:

***"Let food be your medicine, let medicine be your food."* Hippocrates**

This enhanced the credibility and supported the concept that the right foods are critical to your health. Under this he added a sub-head containing the most powerful word in the arsenal of any copywriter - **Free**:

5 Free Reports

When writing sub-heads, they should be written in descending order of benefit strength. The headline being your strongest benefit and the first sub-head is your second strongest benefit, the next sub-head is your third, and so on. This brings people into the copy. So if your headline was:

"A Special Message For Arthritis Sufferers"

Your sub-heads could be:

"New Compound Stops the Pain"

"Read This Special Report Below or Consign Yourself to a Lifetime of Pain"

This second sub-head is an example of a command sub-head; you are telling the prospect what to do.

Headline Types

The type of product you are selling will determine which sort of headline to use. A technological breakthrough will not lend itself to a headline that is emotional or uses a trick technique, as these will detract from the credibility of your product. Instead you could use one that stresses the featured benefit or news value of it.

To give you an idea of how some headline types are more appropriate for



certain products, here are several headlines advertising a new battery that lasts 50% longer than normal batteries, along with other examples.

One – News Headlines

Announcing

"New Battery Lasts 50% Longer Than Other Leading Brand Batteries"

This headline is similar to one that you would see in newspapers. You could use this for products that are new, or are improved versions of existing goods. In addition, they can be used to announce breakthroughs, or important facts that the general public might not know about but which will concern them.

You will have to be really careful if you decide to use this type of headline to announce your product. There is nothing worse than a news headline that leaves the reader thinking, "So what, who cares?"

The following guidelines will help you decide where the news is:

- **WHO** developed it? Who discovered it? Who will get the greatest benefit from this product?
- **WHAT** value in particular is newsworthy? What aspect should you focus on, the product, the people who will benefit from it, or the company who developed it?
- **WHEN** was the product developed? When will it be available?
- **WHERE** did this new product or service come from? Is there anything unique about its origin or place of use?
- **WHY** is the new development newsworthy?
- **HOW** is this product or service used?

This will help you come up with a newsworthy hook that will make your headline sizzle. Be as specific as possible and make sure the benefit of your headline is aimed at your readers. Don't merely be factual as this can make for a very dull headline and one which will be ignored.

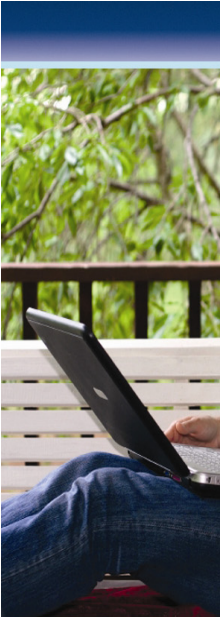
An example of a factual headline would be something like this:

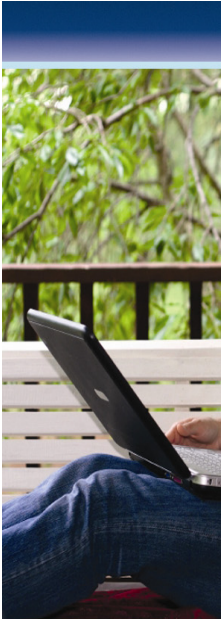
"UltraMow Launch their New Lawnmower"

Thrilling eh? Bet you're dying to go out and buy it! Your response was probably, "Who cares?" However, if we get more specific, then the headline gets more exciting and benefit driven.

"Wimbledon Praise the New Flow-Mow Lawnmower."

That's more compelling, most people reading it (who were thinking of buying a new lawnmower), would think that if Wimbledon Tennis Club





were using the lawnmower, then it must be good. This may still not be the best headline though; the deciding factor would be the news hook that has the most powerful effect on your prospects.

"UltraMow's New 'Double-Cut' Action Will Halve the Number of Times You Have to Mow Your Lawn"

Depending on your audience, they will be either motivated by the first or second headline. If your prospects are avid horticulturists, they will probably be more impressed by the first. However, for most households the second headline will hold more appeal.

As with all headlines, make sure you can back up what your headline states. Don't try and capture attention by making claims that are unsupported in your body copy. If you can't support your claims then your mailshot will lack authority and your sales will suffer. **One of the biggest turn-offs for customers is inflated claims and this is why many don't believe sales letters.**

Typical words used in the 'news' headline are:

- Announcing
- Just released
- At last
- Now Available
- New
- Introducing
- Finally
- Now

Examples:

"At Last, Secrets of the Super Rich Available to Everybody"

"Announcing a Major Breakthrough in Hair Loss Prevention"

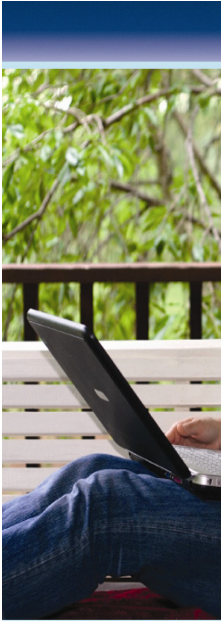
"New Cabbage Soup Diet Can Help You Lose 5 Pounds a Week"

"Finally – a Transparent Sun Cream."

Two – Guarantee Headlines

If your product comes with a really powerful, ironclad guarantee than





this can make a superb headline. There are few things more compelling for a prospect than being told a fantastic benefit that is guaranteed. Your product must live up to your claims though, as must the guarantee, or be prepared for a deluge of angry complaints and refunds.

Here are some examples:

"New Battery Guaranteed to Last 50% Longer"

"Lose 10lbs in 14 Days or Your Money Back"

"New. Learn to Speak French in only 30 Days, 100% Guaranteed"

Three - How To Headlines

There are over 7,000 books in print with a title beginning with 'How To', so you can't go far wrong with this headline. It is really effective as a headline or book title and is perhaps the safest headline to use. It almost cannot be overdone. This headline is best used for offering your prospect advice or solutions to their problems.

Here are some examples:

"How to Get 50% More Battery Power for Your Money"

"How To Win Friends and Influence People"

"How To Make £1300 a Day Even When Times are Tough"

"How To Get Out of Debt"

"How To Get Curls Which Last"

"How a 'Darn Fool' Idea Put Me on the Road to Riches"

Four - Featured Benefit Headlines

There are two ways to write this headline. For the first way to be really effective, you have to know what makes your niche market tick. This allows you to create a headline that gives your prospects what they want. Of course, all headlines must be benefit driven, but this headline is created from knowing the exact benefit your market wants, rather than from looking at your product.

The second way is to use your product's USP as a headline. Your statement should be straightforward - when your product is better than anyone else's all you need to do is to tell the world. There is no need to be clever because you are selling a strong benefit.



Here are some examples:

"Save up to 50% on Battery Costs"

"Because Women Cause Only 32% of Accidents, We Insure You for Less"

"Girls... Want Curls?"

"Why We Can Offer You Home Insurance for Half What You're Paying Now"

Five – 'Reason Why' Headlines

This is where you give your prospect specific reasons why they should buy your product, or read your sales letter (and then want to buy). You don't need to include the words 'reasons why' in the headline. They are effective because they are specific. The specific facts or numbers they contain make them more believable than if they were composed of generalities. E.g. "7 Secrets of..."; "5 Keys to..."; "7 Habits of..."

Here are some examples for you:

"3 Tests That Prove Why ABC Batteries Last Twice As Long"

"7 Habits of Highly Effective People"

"67 Businesses You Can Start Today That Can Make You a Millionaire"

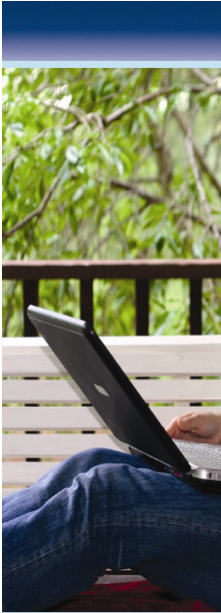
"5 Minute Exercises that Sheds Inches Fast"

"The 7-Step Slimming Plan"

Six - The Testimonial Headline

When people like your product they sometimes send you unsolicited testimonials. You can also ask satisfied customers for them. Using a testimonial as a headline is very powerful, because what your customers think of your product is far more convincing to your prospects than anything you could ever say about it.

Perhaps the most famous testimonial advert is "They Laughed When I Sat Down at the Piano..." John Caples wrote the advert to promote music lessons by mail. In it he describes a party scene in which the advert's narrator, who is known as a jokester, sits down at the piano after an accomplished musician finishes playing for their friends. Caples goes on to describe how everyone at the party assumes he's putting them on, and they



all get ready for a laugh. They are then amazed when he starts playing classical music beautifully.

The narrator's friends want to know how he learned to play so well in such a short time. He of course tells them about the lessons he took by mail. As the advert ends, readers are invited to send in the coupon, ostensibly to learn how they can have a similar experience.

What if Caples had written the advert without using a testimonial? It would have been weaker to say:

"Your friends will be amazed when you show them in a few short weeks what complicated piano pieces you can play."

Using the testimonial makes the advert entertaining and allows readers to put themselves into the advert. Without the story line, the advert would have lacked power. This same technique works equally well for a sales letter. Testimonials can provide credibility when your sales letter needs to make a big claim. Which of these do you think works best?

"How I Made £1 Million in the Stock Market - Without a College Degree"

"Now Almost Anyone Can Make £1 Million in the Stock Market by Following This New Strategy"

The first example is far more believable because someone else has already done it. It makes us think that if they could do it, then perhaps we could too. We want to know how they did it and so will keep reading to find out. The second example sounds far-fetched and we just assume that they're lying. That 'almost anyone' just begs to be challenged. Old ladies? Teenagers? Garbage Collectors? Students? I don't think so!

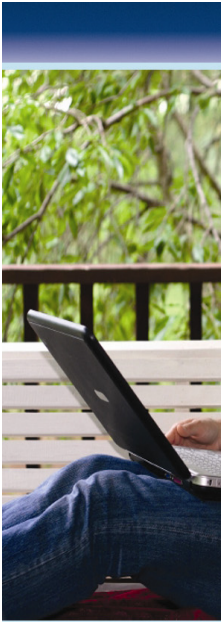
Testimonials can add credibility and emotion to your sales letters, and those are the keys to getting direct response orders. Look at the following two examples for an idea of the different ways in which you can write testimonials.

"How the Smith Family Cut Their Fuel Bills By 30%"

"My Secret For Cutting Fuel Bills By 30%"

In the first headline the copywriter narrates a story about how a family cut their fuel bills. In the second example, the voice of the advertiser is used. John Caples piano advert was written in the style of the first example. It wouldn't have worked if his testimonial had been the head of the music company describing how he taught himself to play using their mail order





music lessons. By using an everyday person that customers could relate to, the copy had far greater impact.

The same applies to the Smith Family; prospects reading the headline will realise that they too could qualify for 30% reduction in fuel bills. This will only work when the writer's claims are easily believable. If not it would be better if he was the voice of the sales pitch and vouched for the claim himself.

A quick word about using celebrities to promote your sales copy. Often the celebrities are only used to generate interest and, as a result are not all that effective. Your mail shot needs more selling power than that.

Here are some examples:

"I Was Tired of Living on Low Pay - so I Started Reading The Wall Street Journal" - by a Subscriber

"How I lost 4 Stone with the Fat Burn Diet Plan"

Seven - The Command Headline

To be most effective this type of headline should begin with action verbs. The headline should then go on to offer a benefit to the prospect that will propel them into ordering your product. In effect, you are **commanding them to take action** and place an order. You have to be careful though, you will need to imply benefits while you are commanding your audience. Customers will not be prompted into action unless they can see how it will help them; therefore ensure the benefits are specific and concrete.

Don't turn people off by making your claims too outrageous and asking readers to do too much. The rest of your copy needs to expand on and explain the benefits portrayed in the headline, otherwise people won't buy. Finally, **never imply that your readers are stupid or incompetent** - people don't take kindly to being insulted e.g., "Quit Wasting Time". Instead, your command must be positive and give your audience a strong offer that can help them.

Here are some examples for you:

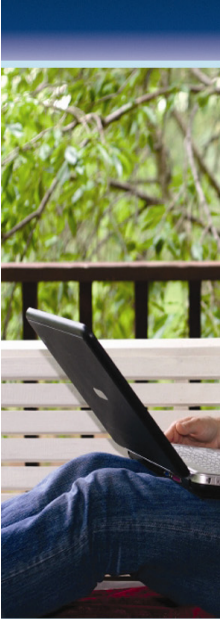
"Try the Battery Recommended by Leading Toy Manufacturers"

"Bank with Us and Slash Your Mortgage Repayments Now"

"Order Christmas Cards Now - Pay After January 20th"

"Buy Two Get One Free"





Eight – The Boastful Headline

Boastful statements attempt to put your product in a good light so that your audience feels positively about it, yet without offering them a specific reason to buy. This means the statement about your product would be positive and general (rather than precise).

This type of headline normally doesn't work in direct marketing, because thanks to its general nature it doesn't motivate people to take action. And this is the whole point of your mailshot.

I have included examples here to give **you an idea of the sort of headlines to avoid**. The underlined words in the last two could be exchanged for anything, because they are so general. Examples:

"We Know ABC Batteries Last Longest"

"The UK's Favourite Coffee"

"We've Provided Everything You Want In a Car"

Nine – The Emotional Headline

All effective headlines are emotional to a greater or lesser extent as it is only by hooking people's feelings that you can make a sale. The greater the emotional response you elicit in your prospect, the more profound the response and the more sales you will make.

Even if the prospect can't identify directly with the story being told, he/she must still be able to empathise with the details.

Here are some examples:

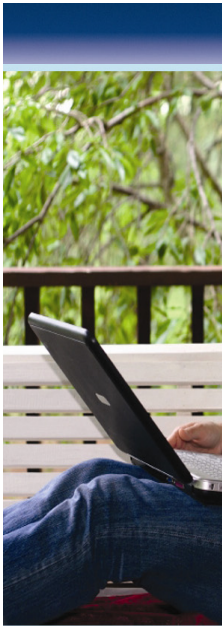
"Will Your Torch Batteries Work When You Need Them Most?"

"I Wept when the Battery in my Camcorder Ran Out at my Daughter's Wedding"

"Sonali is 12 Months Old. She Will Die Without Treatment. Just £5 From You Could Save Her Life"

The kind of emotion you are trying to evoke is tied into the benefit they will gain from your product. By this I mean, you want prospects to imagine how your product will make them feel more secure, be more attractive, be more popular or confident, feel good about themselves, etc. This emotional appeal is normally an underlying component of your headline, but some products are more effectively advertised when directly engaging people's feelings.





Products that lend themselves to emotional headlines are things like personal products and insurance. **The headline:**

"You Can Safeguard Your Family's Health for as Little as £15/Month"

is far more effective than,

"Save 10% on Health Insurance"

A book on health, nutrition or fitness could also be sold in this way, as could exercise machines and possibly dietary supplements - it will be the positive effects of using these products that you will emphasise. The emotional implications of not using your product can also be effectively highlighted, such as in the example headline regarding the camcorder battery.

You can write emotional headlines in a direct or indirect manner. You can be direct by stating that a product will cause something good to happen in a customer's life:

"He Loved the Softness of My Skin When I Started Using ABC Lotion"

Or, using the same example you can be less direct. In this approach you will be hooking the prospect purely with the emotion generated by the headline. This can be a real attention grabber.

"Darling, Your Skin Feels So Soft Tonight!"

The above is also an example of a testimonial, and for this to work it must sound like something a real person would say. Therefore **you don't mention the product at all.**

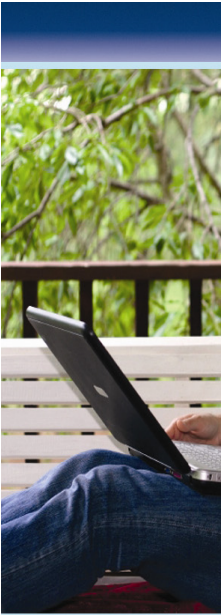
The following illustrates how false it could sound if you try and include the product:

"Darling, Your Skin Feels So Soft Tonight. Is it Due to That New ABC Lotion?"

No man in the heat of passion is going to be even remotely concerned about the body lotion his lover has just used. The sensations of her soft skin, yes, the emulsion of oils and waxes that made it that way, no.

Properly written, a testimonial as a headline can quickly generate rapport with your readers and give your product credibility. It gives the letter that all-essential personal touch. Improperly written testimonial headlines, like the one above, have the opposite effect, making the advertising lose its





appeal and credibility. This will ruin your potential sales.

If you don't use the testimonial-style headline, then you can exaggerate the emotional headline without making it sound unrealistic. For example:

"Enchant Your Lover Tonight With Softness"

It's not important that the reader doesn't know exactly what her lover will be enchanted by. And everyone knows he won't be literally enchanted. It is the emotional effect her soft skin may have on him.

A combination of emotional and news headlines doesn't make a credible statement, each part will simply cancel the other out and end up sounding silly. Your result will be something like this:

"Enchant Your Lover Tonight With 50% Extra Softness"

Ten – The Information Headline

This headline can be used for products that will not lend themselves to any other headline without it sounding silly. It is also an effective way to select your audience by offering information in the form of specific facts and figures. Information changes people's lives, so if people think you have information that can help them, they'll keep reading.

Write a headline beginning with the words How, How I, or How You, to see if an information headline fits your product. Using the word 'To' allows you to identify an audience if you have something they will want to know about.

Here are some examples:

"To People Spending More than they Need on Batteries"

"To Young People Wanting More Than Just a Job After College"

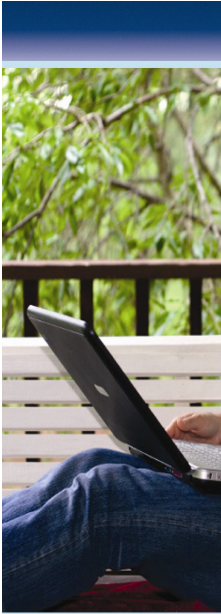
"Advice to Business Owners Who Need More Hours in a Day"

"Which of These Helpful Brochures on Increasing Sales and Cash Flow Would You Like Me To Send You Absolutely Free?"

Experiment with headlines and test to see which ones pull the best. Quite often, the more personal contact there is in your headline, the more effective it is.

In the following two examples the first headline is very brief and is **more like a caption...**





"Hottest New Business Ideas of the Year"

The second one has a **more one-to-one ring to it...**

"Let Me Send You 12 of the Hottest New Business Ideas of the Year"

Here is another example of an information headline:

"Lightweight, Italian Folding Tea Trolley in Four Smart Colours"

Eleven – The Offer Headline

This headline type is effective and gets right to the point. It would normally form part of your offer and is similar to the guarantee that you would use in your copy. It can work well for products that are useful but not exciting and would be otherwise difficult to grab attention.

The words 'new' and 'your' can strengthen the pulling-power of your sales letter. Offer headlines are also effective because they have the ring of a real person talking to them, which not only makes it harder to ignore but enables you to win people's trust faster.

Write your offer down on a piece of paper first and play around with the words to see if it will work as an offer headline. Your offer should describe a benefit about your product in an exciting way.

Here are some examples:

"Try ABC Batteries Free for 30 Days"

"Try the *Secrets of the Super Rich* Free in Your Own Home Without Obligation for 30 Days"

Lots of great stuff next lesson!

