

# Direct Response Millions

## LESSON FOUR

by

Vince Stirling

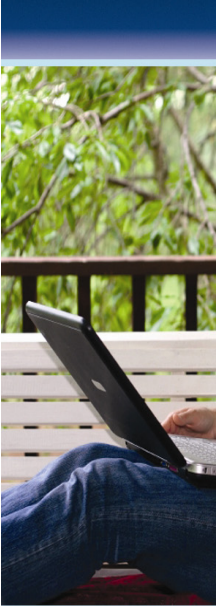
**The Easy Way to Become a Top-Gun Copywriter and Make  
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## How to Express Yourself

This month we're going to learn more about headlines; before moving on to the salutation, opening paragraph, body copy and guarantee. As you know from last lesson, headlines fall under several different types. Don't be overly concerned about fitting your headline into slots. These headline examples are there to guide you when writing a suitable headline for your own product.

Continuing with our battery example from last month, let's say you've decided to concentrate on the benefit of your batteries lasting 50% longer than other leading brands. There are many ways in which you can express this:

**"Save Money - New Batteries that Last 50% Longer"**

**"New Batteries Last 50% Longer"**

**"Now You Can Save Money on Batteries with the ABC Battery that Lasts 50% Longer"**

**"Announcing - New Batteries that Last 50% Longer than other Leading Brands"**

**"At Last a Battery that Keeps Going Longer"**

## Hand-Writing a Headline

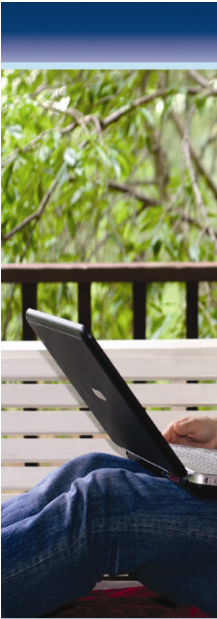
As your headline is the most read part of any letter, having it hand-written can make it stand out even more. This is great for attracting attention and adding interest. The headline looks best when it gives the impression that the writer had a spontaneous burst of enthusiasm for the product as he/she was writing. Of course, the writing needs to be easily legible; this applies to all hand-written parts of your letter, but is even more important for the headline.

You may like to test a successful letter with a hand-written headline against a typed headline. Never try and make your headline look hand written by using handwriting style fonts like Palace Script. All this ends up looking like is difficult-to-read typed headline, where the writer has tried unsuccessfully to mimic words written by hand. Don't do it. It looks amateurish and silly.

## The Best Words to Use in Headlines

Direct marketing gurus have invested millions of dollars testing which words are most effective in headlines. If tastefully done you can combine one or more of these words in your headline. You can use the words given below, confident that they are the most powerful.

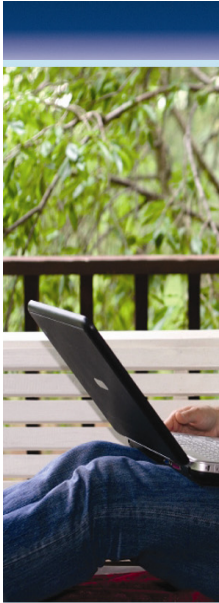




1. **Announcing** ("Announcing a Breakthrough in Cancer Prevention");
2. **Secrets of** ("7 Secrets of the Millionaires");
3. **New** ("A New Effective Approach to Losing Weight");
4. **Now** ("Now You Can Have the Body You've Always Dreamed Of");
5. **Amazing** ("You'll Feel Amazing After Using the 'Relaxer' for Only 2 Weeks");
6. **Facts You** ("Facts You Need To Stay Healthy");
7. **Breakthrough** ("A Breakthrough in Pain Relief");
8. **At Last** ("At Last A Diet That Really Works");
9. **Advice to** ("Advice To All Aspiring Millionaires");
10. **The Truth of** ("The Truth of How Vitamin 'C' Can Prevent Heart Disease");
11. **Protect** ("Protect Yourself From The Coming Stock Market Crash");
12. **Life** ("What Price Your Child's Life?");
13. **Here** ("Here is the Latest in Money Making Offers");
14. **Discover** ("Discover the Path to Riches Used by Millionaires");
15. **Do You** ("Do You Want to be a Millionaire?");
16. **Bargains** ("Don't Miss These Hundreds of Bargains");
17. **Yes** ("Yes! You Can Have the Figure You've Always Wanted");
18. **Love** ("You'll Love Making Heads Turn When You're in a Jaguar");
19. **How Much** ("How Much Money Can This Book Save You In Tax?");
20. **How Would** ("How Would You Spend Your Luxury Holiday in Mauritius?");
21. **This** ("This is the Only Guide on Tax Shelters You Will Need");
22. **Only** ("Only Read this if You Want to Become a Millionaire");
23. **Sale** ("The Greatest Sale of Pure Silk Lingerie Ever");
24. **Hate** ("You'll Hate to Miss Our Latest Offers");
25. **How To** ("How to Write a Book and Sell a Million Copies");
26. **Free** ("Free Beer For Every Customer!");
27. **You** ("You Can Have What You Want in Life").



Out of all of these words the last three, How To, Free and You, are the most powerful. The word 'Free' instantly attracts attention because everybody loves getting things for free. But use this word carefully and ensure your sales pitch is convincing, as people are cynical and will look out for the catch. The example that I have used, 'Free beer' (number 26) will catch people's attention, but if the body copy doesn't offer free beer, then the



reader will feel deceived and stop reading.

**As I said earlier, never, ever use a headline like this merely to attract attention** and then put something like, "Right, now I've got your attention...", as the reader will feel cheated and will not order.

The word 'You' implies a benefit to the customer and as people (me, you, everyone) are self-obsessed, this word is very provocative.

## **Use Only 17 Words or Less in Your Headline**

In 17 words or less, you need to write a headline for your product or service that incorporates the biggest benefit that you can think of using one or more of the 27 best words to use in headlines. Keeping your headline within this word boundary is a good discipline. You can break this rule when you get good. In tests only one headline with greater than 17 words pulled! There is no lower limit to how many words you use (although zero might be a bit hard...).

Later on I will be giving you examples of headlines that have made money; out of these you will see that only a few have more than 17 words. These people broke the rule because they knew what they were doing. Until you are an expert in copywriting you would do well to stick to the rules, this one in particular.

We'll finish headlines in the next lesson and then talk about how guarantees and testimonials can make your sales soar!

### **Time for a recap:**

## **Five Rules for Successful Headlines**

### **One - Your Headline Must Appeal to Your Reader's Self-Interest.**

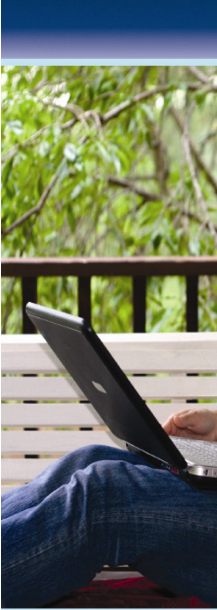
Your prospects want to know, 'What's In It For Me' and so your headline must convey the strongest benefit of your product to them.

### **Two - Your Headline Must Single Out People in Your Target Market.**

If it doesn't do this, then it has failed. Headlines are the word equivalent of you grabbing hold of the prospect and sticking your product underneath their nose. However, because you are not there to convince people that your product is worth their time and attention, your headline has to do this task for you.







### **Three - Your Headline Should Be No More Than 17 Words.**

Most people only read the headline so you need to encapsulate in 17 words or less, a clear and exciting message that will compel the prospect to read the body copy.

### **Four - The Success of Your Sales Pitch Ultimately Rests on Your Headline.**

If this vital statement doesn't answer the question 'What's In It For Me?' you won't grab your prospects' attention.

Without their attention, your sales letter won't get read. And if your letter isn't read, you won't get any orders. And if you don't get any orders, you've wasted a lot of money.

### **Five - Specifics Not Generalities Sell Product.**

Specifics are more believable. For example, "How You Can Have £29,567.00 in Your Bank Account in 60 Days" has far more credibility than "How You Can Quickly Make Lots of Money".

### **Examples of Headlines That Have Made Money**

Reviewing headlines that have made money in the past is an easy way of learning to write powerful headlines yourself. To gain the maximum benefit from these headlines I urge you to write them out. This will give you a much better feel for their magnetism and eye-catching appeal than you will get from simply reading them.

This is an important technique for learning how to write superb headlines. It will only take you half an hour, so don't skip this exercise.

However, when preparing your own headline, do not copy any of these examples verbatim as this may violate copyrights. Instead, **use the ideas contained within them as an inspiration for your own headline ideas.** It is only the words verbatim that is copyrightable, there is nothing to stop you from adapting a headline you find particularly powerful with your own sales message.

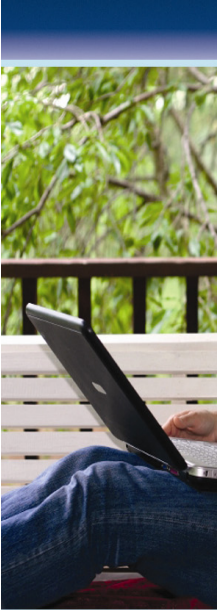
For example, remember this headline several pages back?

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

From this another millionaire copywriter adapted the headline for his own purposes and came up with:

#### **"What Will You Do When Big Brother Smashes Down Your Door and Seizes All of Your Assets?"**





The headline he constructed is as compelling as the one he received inspiration from, however nobody could accuse him of stealing the original, although clearly the general idea is the same. I have also seen several variations of the 'They Laughed When I Sat Down At The Piano' idea.

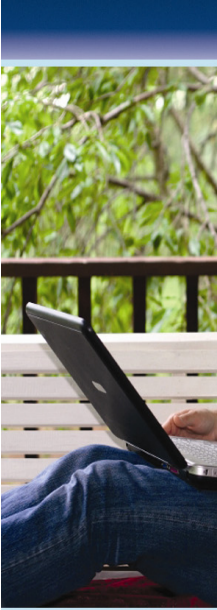
The headlines below are written by the great names in copywriting: John Caples; David Ogilvy; Claude Hopkins; Robert Collier; Maxwell Sackheim; Stuart Goldsmith and Ted Nicholas. Many of these headlines are considered 'classics' as they are so famous and effective.

Strive to improve upon these headlines as you use them for your own purposes. There are enormous possibilities for you in adapting these headlines, so make the most of them.

## **127 headlines That Made Money**

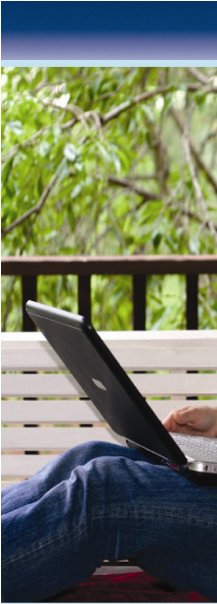
1. They Laughed When I Sat Down at the Piano - But When I Started to Play!;
2. The Secret to Becoming a Millionaire is Simply Using the Right Words;
3. Can You Afford the UK's Most Expensive Money-Making Book?;
4. How You Can Make a Fortune From the Coming Stock-Market Crash;
5. Do You Make These Mistakes in English?;
6. How \$7 Started me on the Road to \$35,000 a Year;
7. Announcing the New Ford Cars For 2008;
8. Magic Words That Bring You Riches;
9. Order Christmas Gifts Now - Pay After January 20<sup>th</sup>;
10. Wage Your Own Personal Tax Revolt;
11. I Was Tired of Living on Low Pay - So I Started Reading the Wall Street Journal;
12. The Ultimate Tax Shelter;
13. Get Rid of Money Worries for Good;
14. Here's How to Have a Long and Healthy Life;
15. What's Wrong in This Picture?
16. They Grinned When the Waiter Spoke to me in French - But Their Laughter Changed to Amazement at my Reply (note the influence of headline #1 on this! Also, at 19 words this feels overlong, doesn't it?);
17. How An 'S' Corporation Can Save You Tax;
18. What Makes a Woman Loveable?;
19. Can You Talk About Books With the Rest of Them?;





20. How I Became Popular Overnight;
21. Wanted - Your Services as a High-Paid Real Estate Specialist;
22. Do You Make These Travel Mistakes? (Note influence of headline #5);
23. How I Raised Myself From Failure to Success in Selling (A rare example of a successful 'me' headline);
24. What Makes a Consultant Successful?
25. Stop Writing Letters the Hard Way;
26. How to Improve Your Memory in one Evening;
27. How to do Business Tax Free;
28. Now! Own Florida Land This Easy Way... \$20 Down and \$20 a Month;
29. How a 'Fool Stunt' Made me a Star Salesman (Another 'me' message, but we've just *got* to know...);
30. Thousands Have This Priceless Gift - But Never Discover It;
31. You, a Millionaire Writer?
32. Free to High School Teachers -\$6 to Others;
33. How the Next 90 Days Can Change Your Life;
34. 7 Ways to Break the Overweight Habit;
35. The Lazy Man's Way to Riches;
36. How to do Your Christmas Shopping in 5 Minutes;
37. Car Insurance at Low Cost - if You Are a Careful Driver;
38. Who Else Wants a Screen Star Figure?
39. Imagine... Holding an Audience Spellbound for 30 Minutes!
40. It Cleans Your Breath While it Cleans Your Teeth;
41. How to Win Friends and Influence People;
42. Lose Ugly Fat - an Average of 7 Pounds a Month;
43. How a Strange Accident Saved me From Baldness (Implication: If it can save ME....);
44. The Most Comfortable Shoes You've Ever Worn or Your Money Back;
45. When Doctors Feel Rotten This is What They Do;
46. The Most Complete and Most Scholarly Dictionary in the English Language \$17.50...Publisher's List Price: \$90;
47. Find Your Own Tax Haven;
48. How I Retired on a Guaranteed Income for Life;
49. Slash Your Letter Writing Time By 80% and Write Better Letters;

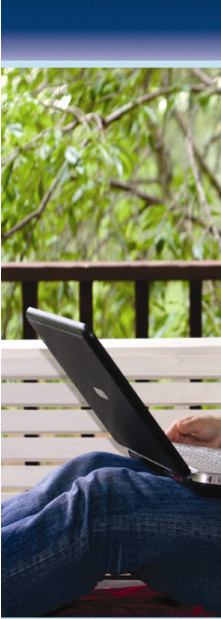




50. How You Can Get a Loan of \$500;
51. 161 New Ways to a Gourmet's Heart - In This Fascinating Book For Cooks;
52. How a Man of 40 Can Retire in 15 Years Time;
53. New House Paint by Du Pont Keeps Your White House Whiter;
54. 10 Ways to Beat the High Cost of Living;
55. How Investors Can Save 75% on Broker Commission This Year;
56. Free Book Tells You 12 Secrets of Better Lawn Care;
57. Can You See Where These Two Lines Cross? (Picture of a big hand-drawn 'X');
58. How to Feel Fit at Any Age;
59. Sleeper Stock Bargains;
60. How to Beat Tension Without Pills;
61. New... a Cream Deodorant Which Safely Stops Perspiration;
62. Here's a Quick Way to Break up a Cold;
63. The Eighth Wonder of the World;
64. Why G.E Bulbs Give More Light This Year;
65. Play Guitar in 7 Days or Money Back;
66. How I Started a New Life With \$7;
67. Quick Relief For Tired Eyes;
68. Thousands Now Play Who Never Thought They Could;
69. How to Collect From Social Security at any Age;
70. Are You Ashamed of Smells in Your Home?
71. Tonight Serve This Ready-Mixed Chocolate Pudding;
72. How to Stop Worrying;
73. What's New in Summer Sandwiches?
74. How to Get Rid of Inferiority Complex;
75. I Lost That Ugly Bulge in 2 Minutes;
76. The Most Amazing Shakespeare Bargain Ever Offered;
77. You Don't Have to be Rich to Retire on a Guaranteed Income For Life;
78. Who Else Wants a Lighter Cake - in Half The Mixing Time?
79. How to Get Your Cooking Bragged About;
80. The Secret of Making People Like You;
81. How to Make Money Writing Short Paragraphs;

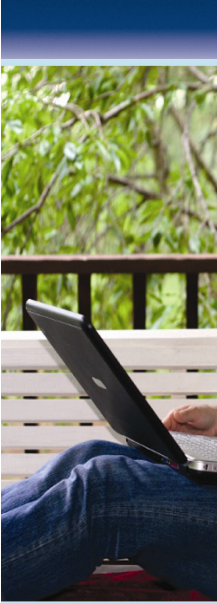






82. Double Your Money Back If This Isn't The Best Onion Soup You Ever Tasted;
83. Can You Spot These 7 Common Decorating Sins?
84. Girls... Want Quick Curls?
85. To a Mother Whose Child is Three Years Old;
86. Car Owners... Save One Gallon of Gas in Every Ten;
87. Linen Napkin Luxury at a Paper Napkin Price;
88. How £20 Spent May Save You £2,000;
89. Have You Any of These 5 Skin Troubles?
90. Will You Give Me 7 Days to Prove I Can Make you a New Man?
91. I Gambled a Postage Stamp and Won \$35,840 in 2 Years;
92. How I Made a Fortune With a 'Fool' Idea;
93. To Men Who Want to Quit Work Some Day;
94. How to Get Enthusiastic Applause - Even a Standing Ovation - Every Time You Speak;
95. The Deaf Now Hear Whispers;
96. Hand Woven by the Mountain People of New Mexico;
97. To Men Who Want to be Independent in the Next 10 Years;
98. Free to Brides - \$2 To Others;
99. Reader's Digest Tells Why Filtered Cigarette Smoke is Better For Your Health;
100. Which of These Five Skin Troubles Would You Like to End?
101. If You Are a Careful Driver You Can Save Money on Car Insurance;
102. Buy no Desk Until You've Seen This Sensation of the Business Show;
103. Protect Your Corporation's Tax Shelter Status Without a Lawyer;
104. They Thought I Was Crazy to Ship Live Maine Lobsters as Far as 1,800 Miles From the Ocean;
105. How to Have a Cool, Quiet Bedroom - Even on Hot Nights;
106. To a Man Who is 35 and Dissatisfied;
107. Have You These Symptoms of Nervous Exhaustion?
108. No Time For Yale - Took College Home;
109. Great New Discovery Kills Kitchen Odours Quick!
110. I Tried 'Em All, But This is The Polish I Use on my Own Car;
111. To People Who Want to Write - But Can't Get Started;
112. Will Your Scalp Stand the Fingernail Test?





113. Owners Save 20% to 50% on Fuel With the G.E. Oil Furnace;
114. The Tastiest Ocean Treat From Gloucester Plump, Tender, Juicy Salt Mackerel Fillet;
115. Men Who 'Know it All' Are Not Invited to Read This Page;
116. How Two Natural Foods Can Prevent and Even Cure Cancer;
117. To a \$40,000 Man Who Would Like to be Making \$80,000;
118. Money-Saving Bargains From America's Oldest Diamond Discount House;
119. You're Never Too Old to Hear Better;
120. How You Can Give up Your Job and Make a Million Pounds Instead;
121. How To Stretch Your Inflated Money;
122. One Place Setting Free For Every Three You Buy;
123. Who Else Wants a Whiter Wash - With no Hard Work?
124. Wanted - Safe Men For Dangerous Times;
125. Instant Corporation While U-Wait;
126. How to Make Yourself Judgement Proof;
127. At 60 Miles an Hour The Loudest Noise in This New Rolls-Royce Comes From the Electric Clock (Again, 18 words and it feels a little long. I'd change 'Miles an Hour' to 'MPH').

When writing your own headlines, spend as long as it takes until you create one that is really powerful. If you have to write a hundred headlines, so be it. The money you will make from a brilliant headline compared with a so-so headline will more than make up for the extra effort involved.

### **Golden Insider Tip to remember...**

**Don't be lazy about writing headlines – your efforts will pay dividends.**

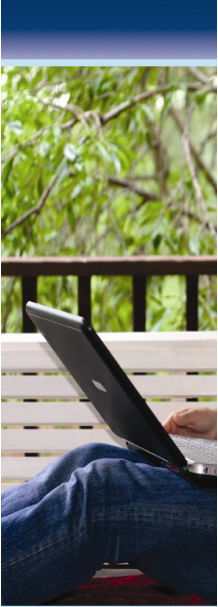
### **Photographs and Headlines**

Most people are visually oriented, so using a photograph can really help to grab attention and boost sales, but your photograph and headline must complement each other. Don't laugh, but I have seen photographs in sales material that bears no connection with the product being sold! This merely leaves the reader dubious or confused; either will lose you sales.

The photograph should emphasise your headline, so if you place your headline under the picture it acts like a caption.

Here's an example...





The product was a manual on public speaking. Although entrepreneurs who want to get ahead will probably have to speak in public at some stage, a study showed that 54% of Americans would rather face death than make a speech! The **headline underneath the photo** was:

### **"How To Get Enthusiastic Applause - Even a Standing Ovation - Every Time You Make a Speech."**

The photo showed an audience smiling, clapping and giving a standing ovation as the speech ends. Isn't that a fantastic combination of photo and headline? Can't you just feel the pulling power?

### **A Summary of the Dos and Don'ts of Headlines**

You can break the rules when you have had some killer headlines which work. Meanwhile, below is a summary of what millionaires have used so far. You can use this as a quick reference guide:

- Use upper and lower case letters. Do not use all caps as they are hard to read;
- Capitalise the first letter of each word used;
- Use classic typefaces (e.g. Times Roman), not newly developed ones;
- Do not print in 'reverse' type - white letters on black background. Use black letters on white or yellow background;
- Quotation marks around headlines make them more noticeable;
- Use words proven to be successful over time;
- Include no more than one big idea;
- When using a large photograph or drawing, lead with the picture and use a headline under it as a caption. Then begin your copy;
- Your promise must be believable.

The purpose of the headline is to:

- Attract attention;
- Communicate a strong benefit ;
- Appeal to the self-interest of the reader - 'what's in it for me?'
- Set the tone of the offer;
- Select the right audience;
- Get them to continue reading.

Now that we've covered headlines, let's move on to the other components of successful copy.





## Salutation

Never begin your letter with Dear Sir or Dear Sir or Madame. These salutations are just so formal. You wouldn't put this on a letter to your best friend so don't put it on a piece of copy that is intended as a personal message. My personal favourite is 'Dear Friend', as this is broad and yet intimate enough, for your letter to appear personal to them.

I have tried letters with and without a salutation; and letters with, always out-pull those without. Other examples are:

- Dear Beleaguered Taxpayer,
- Dear Overburdened Taxpayer;
- Dear Fellow Briton/American;
- Dear Fellow Citizen;
- Dear World Traveller;
- Dear Fellow Tennis Nut;
- Dear Collector,
- Dear Friend of [your company's name].


There are no real differences in response rate so long as your salutation is related to the person you are addressing. Except when using: Dear John Smith (Personalised to the addressee).

This salutation pulls more than any other does. People love the sound of their own name and of course it makes the letter far more personal. Unfortunately, you will have to computer generate your sales letter to do this which usually costs much more than one that is mass produced.

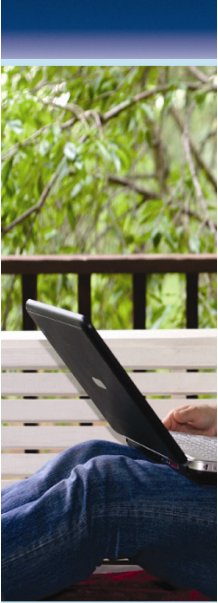
A cheaper way to make your letter more personal and build rapport is to word your salutation so that it sounds like the reader 'belongs'. People are highly social beings and love to feel that they belong to a group or society of like-minded enthusiasts. A simple way to do this is to add 'Fellow' after 'Dear'. For example:

- Dear Fellow Tennis Nut.

Avoid using this where you are providing the reader with information to change his current situation. Examples:

- Dear Fellow Beleaguered Taxpayer;
  - Dear Fellow Debtor;
  - Dear Fellow Victim.
- 





Would you like to be greeted with such a salutation? Nobody wants to be in a negative situation, and if readers think you're in the same way, they may think you are going to moan and groan about the situation rather than help them. Avoid all negative connotations when using this technique.

Closing the letter appropriately is also important. 'Yours sincerely' makes your letter sound like a business letter rather than a personal one. I suggest a simple 'Sincerely', or something in the line of 'Yours for more exciting travel'.

Whatever salutation you decide to use, address the reader as an individual. Keep your salutation personal and never sound like you are addressing a group, as this diminishes rapport.

As a general rule, it does not pay to personalise your salutation unless your product is priced at £350 or more. If you have a product that is priced slightly less than this that you are getting a good response for, it may be worth testing the same letter personalised to see if this further increases sales.

## Writing Body Copy

### What is Your Intention?

Before you start writing, think about what you are trying to achieve in your letter. What is it specifically that you are trying to persuade the reader to do? Write these points down and use them as a framework for your letter. The more you plan your letter in this way, the easier it will be to write, the less likely you will be to put irrelevant stuff in and therefore the more convincing it will be.

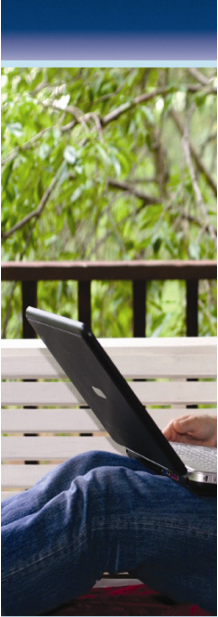
The purpose of your letter is to elicit in your reader a desire for your product that they probably didn't have that morning when they woke up, but now as a direct response to your letter, realise how lacking their life is without it. To be successful you need a believable promise that is backed up with strong benefits, features and testimonials.

Get out of your comfort zone but keep the customer in theirs. People only buy when in their comfort zone - they want to feel good about making a purchase. If they're out of their comfort zone they will be anxious and probably not trust you.

Generating trust is very important in a sales letter. Prospects need to think, "I trust this person, I believe what they say."

Your goal in direct marketing is to get the reader to do exactly as you ask, your only method of achieving this is through your sales letter. As a result you should always write the letter with your reader in mind, ask yourself how he/she would want to hear this important message from you.





They will certainly be listening out for their favourite radio station WIIFM ("What's In It For Me?"). And so this is exactly what you must address. They're not interested in you, they don't know you from Adam. People are only concerned about their own problems. Don't go on about yourself, your readers couldn't care less, they're not reading your letter out of altruism, they want to know something that is going to benefit them.

## Stay in Character

Before you begin writing the body copy, think about the image that you are trying to project. Craft an appropriate opening and ensure that your copy maintains this image throughout; any deviation from this 'voice' will lessen the impact of your message and could have disastrous consequences. Stay in character and only project a few closely related parts of this character in your letter.

For example, in Stuart Goldsmith's Inner Circle letter, his character is a powerful millionaire. He opens with a few paragraphs of background information on himself that is relevant to the copy. He mentions the books that he has written; there is nothing like authorship to give you credibility in the eyes of your prospects. The opening paragraph also project an air of success, power and mystery. This is important because he is selling wealth, power and freedom to people who join his elite group. He maintains this air of suspense and intrigue throughout the letter. This is essential for His sales pitch to retain its integrity.

## Writing Style and Layout

You need to write copy the way people talk. For example, you wouldn't say "you'd reach your outcome" because nobody talks like this, instead you would put "everything would work out great". Tell a story and put the reader behind the scenes.

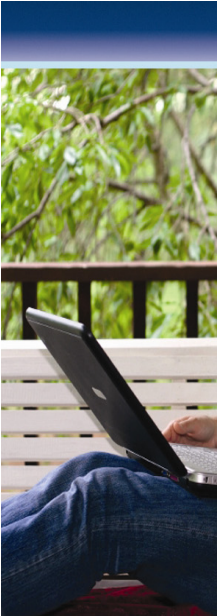
Use action, emotional words. E.g. "throw away your fake nails forever". Find the strongest words you can e.g. "catapult" rather than "propel".

There are five essential ingredients to a good letter:

1. Clarity;
2. Flow;
3. Passion;
4. Believability;
5. Close.

Having a good layout and avoiding obvious errors such as 'reverse type' can improve the response to already good copy by 20% or 30%. Your prospect shouldn't have to read every point to understand the product and want to buy, let people get the main points from the sub-heads. A lot of people will scan the letter, so make sure you have lots of bullet points highlighting the benefits of your product.





## Photograph of You

Consider having a photo of you in the copy as this can increase response. Get an old photo so that you don't compromise your privacy too much by people recognising you. **If it's your name on the copy it must be your photo.**

You can have more than one photo but it must enhance the credibility of your letter. Have a dramatic one on the envelope or the beginning of the sales letter. Perception is reality, so create a perception that dramatizes reality. A photo says two things: first, here is a real person, not some back-room copywriter; second this person believes in the product enough to have his photograph in the mailing.

## Opening Paragraph

The opening paragraph is crucial because people will decide from this if the letter is going to be easy and interesting to read and has something in it for them. Spend time on it and make sure it has a lot of impact.

It should let the reader know in no uncertain terms that this letter is important to him/her. Give the reader the feeling that he/she is being brought 'inside' a place, product or event.

The opening sentence should incorporate your next strongest benefit, or you can open with a single powerful statement. You then proceed immediately with the benefits.

At this point you include the benefits from the 3x5 cards, either by listing the benefits using bullets or weaving them into the copy in a more conversational style. (Use the same opening and continue from where you left off above.)

There are lots of effective ways, one good strategy is to begin with an anecdote and then follow up with a 'billboard'. A billboard is a powerful statement that incorporates your unique selling proposition. This is then backed up with supportive statistics to give your letter that all-important element of credibility.

After this you declare all the hot benefits of your product with the hottest first, offer one to five free bonuses, describe your guarantee, ask for the order, and add a compelling P.S. You then tell them step by step how to order your product on the order form.

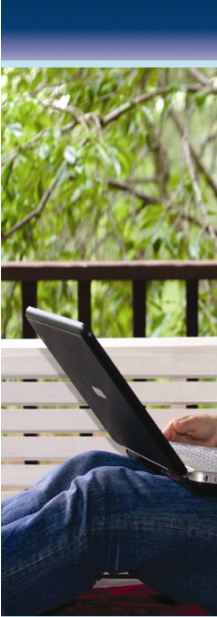
Let's now look at some example openings...

## Style #1 Anecdotal Opening

Here is an example of an anecdotal opening:

Anecdote #1: "In 2004 Pat McCallister went broke in the commodity





business. A Chicago resident, he decided to try a new business. Pat started a computer cleaning company and operated from his home. After 3 years his sales soared to \$500,000. This year he expects \$1,000,000. His profits exceed \$1,000 a day."

Anecdote #2: "In 2004 'Guerrilla' Bill Myers lived in a remote cabin in the country without running water. He had no savings or capital. With a borrowed \$600 he created a DVD, a low budget information marketer. It was a big hit. By 2007, after grossing a million dollars, he retired and moved to New Zealand."

Billboard: "Pat and Bill, along with thousands of others, had something in common. They mastered the secrets of direct marketing. These techniques are taught by a small but elite handful of master marketers. Direct marketing has the power to change anyone's life overnight."

Statistics: "There are over 20,000 direct marketing companies in the USA. They are mostly small businesses. According to the Wall Street Journal, gross sales by direct marketing companies exceed 350 billion dollars."

You too can use the power of direct marketing to build a small business and achieve your financial goals."

## **Style #2 Lead With a Short Sentence Then Benefits**

Another letter opening style is to begin with a powerful short sentence or paragraph. Then you proceed straight to the benefits. Here is an example:

"I will reveal the shocking truth about the latest tax bill. Once you discover the secrets, you can survive and prosper under the biggest tax increase in history. Learn how to:

- Limit your federal tax to just 15% of income. (See page 12);
- Put aside \$30,000 each year in a lucrative pension plan (See page 77) that accumulates tax free so can you retire in style (See page 39);
- Set up tax deductible educational plans for your children (See page 18);
- Pay zero tax if you want to be really aggressive (See page 141) in ways that are perfectly legal (See page 173)."







### **Style #3 Short Paragraphs that Amplify the Headline**

In this example the letter opens with a compelling first sentence that supports the headline and sub-headline. You then use short paragraphs to amplify the headline promise, like this:

#### **"How To Get Enthusiastic Applause - Even A Standing Ovation - Every Time You Speak!"**

Leadership in all fields today requires you to be an outstanding public speaker.

Dear Friend,

Picture yourself enjoying the smiles and the pleased look of excitement on the faces of your audience.

When you finish speaking, you receive thunderous applause. Several in the audience stand. And then the audience rises spontaneously and gives you a standing ovation!

Suppose this response was typical of every speech you were to ever give from here on? Wouldn't you then look forward to future speaking engagements? Most likely you would enjoy every minute of it!

At times you may consider public speaking commitments an uncomfortable, or even dreadful task. Many people feel this way when asked to or are obliged to speak.

Just imagine what a difference it would make to get only enthused, positive feedback from all your presentations. The personal satisfaction of a well-received speech is one of life's greatest pleasures.

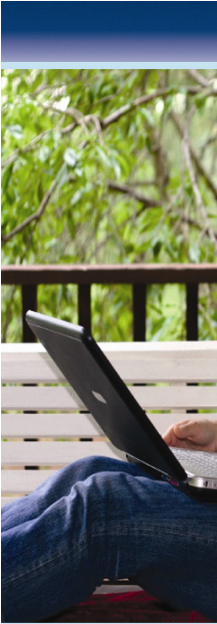
### **Style #4 Ask a Question**

Here is Stuart Goldsmith to explain this opening:

"In my sales letter for 'Racing For Cash' below, I open with several very provocative questions. Asking the reader questions like this, one after another to which he is bound to answer 'yes' does two things. First of all, this is a fantastic way of pacing the reader into agreement mode. Secondly, it draws the reader into the letter, by the time we get to the end of the first paragraph he's already thinking about how he would like to spend an extra £1,000 a month.

In the last sentence of this first paragraph, I then answer the question that is forming in his mind, before he has opportunity to question the credibility of my claims. Due to all the 'get rich quick schemes' people are bombarded with I had to request that he read my letter to the end (bearing in mind that in my first paragraph I got him into 'yes' mode). I had to give him a reason for doing so of course and tag on a benefit ('...use it for yourself').





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

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

Dear Friend,

Would you be interested in a way of generating £1,000.00 extra cash each and every month? Supposing this cash was also untaxable? Wouldn't that be a bonus? What would you be prepared to do for £1000 in £50 notes, right in your hand each month? How does one hour of easy work every week sound? I know what you're thinking, I couldn't believe it either when I was told about it five years ago.

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

This second excellent example from Nightingale-Conant of the provocative question opener, will have the reader nodding to them all. Notice how clever the final question is, the reader may be thinking that yes, they would love all these things but there is no chance of them happening to him/her. This question gives them a tantalising hope that they could do it... this year!

## **“If You Wanted a Lifetime of Unlimited Wealth, This New Information From Robert G Allen Will be an Eye-Opener!”**

Robert G. Allen asks...

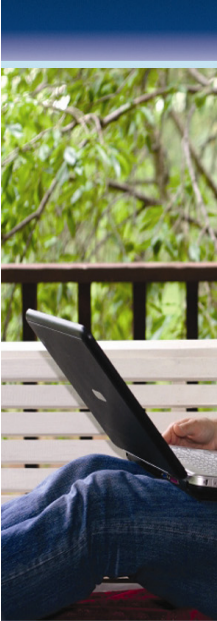
- "Do you want to be financially free?"
- "Do you want to end your money pressures forever?"
- "Do you want to double your income?"
- "Do you want to build a lifetime stream of income?"
- "If you said yes, do you know how to make it happen... this year?"

In this special report, you'll discover how a simple method is helping thousands of people create streams of money flowing to them for the rest of their lives - with no employees, no selling, little or no start up cash, little or no risk and no inventory.

[Then, 'Dear Friend,']

The question opener is also the easiest to get wrong. The worst kind of opening in the world is a question that leaves the reader thinking 'so what?' You've just given them the perfect reason to bin your letter without further





analysis, as in the following example from The Times:

Dear Mrs Jones,

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

Thrilling eh? This question could be answered with either a 'yes' or a 'no', either reply makes the reader want to stop reading. Needless to say, I didn't rush out and buy The Times.

## Style #5 "If You're Like Me.."

Another variation of this is "If you're like I am..." This opening is very reader involving and is a great way of gaining rapport.

## Benefits

Always sell the 'sizzle', not the 'sausage' as I said earlier. What's much more important than your product or service, as far as the customer is concerned, is the benefits he/she will receive from buying it.

- Will it make his/her life easier or better?
- Will it make him healthier or fitter?
- Will it enhance his home, his car, his boat?

No matter what you're selling, all the customer is really interested in is, 'what's in it for me?'

**You need to sell the idea that your reader can be younger, healthier, wealthier and sexier and a whole lot happier with your product.**

If you are selling to businesses, remember that people are humans first and business people second. They will still buy things for emotional reasons, that is, benefits and not features.

Once you have written all the benefits of your product down on 3x5 cards, arrange them in order of strongest down to weakest. This is the order in which you will write them in your copy. **The benefits of your product must be perceived as more valuable than the money that you ask.** Should you save some of your best benefits until last?

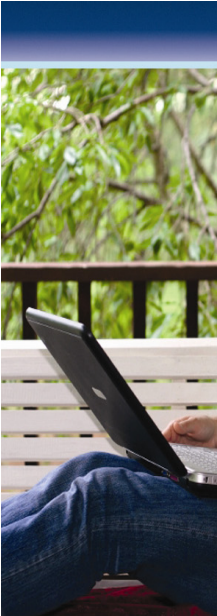
The answer is no, you want all the best benefits up front, otherwise your reader will simply stop reading. You will then lose the sale.

## How Long Should a Letter Be?

Copy can never be too long; it can only be too boring. Your letter needs to be as long as it takes to sell your product, but not a single word more. This can be anything from 2 pages to 36 pages! But 6, 8, 12 or 16 pages are the norm. This applies to web sites too! Remember this maxim: **long copy sells, short copy doesn't.** Don't worry about having too long a letter, if your copy is interesting, people will be happy to read it all (think of some hobby or interest you are passionate about – you wouldn't mind reading a long piece







of sales copy on that subject).

Tell the whole story, this will then convince the reader that you're not conning him or her, show them a good reason why your product is so cheap and yet still top quality. Take as much space as you need to educate your prospect.

Let them hear from you again and again why your product is good. This way they won't cancel when they get the bill for their car repairs etc. and need some money. Make it irresistible.

Your letter has to be long to convince your customers that your product is reputable and fulfils a want they have. And it takes time to warm them up, sell the sizzle, back it with facts and ask for the order. This flat-out cannot be done in less than 6 sides of A4. You can probably relate to this yourself - **the more you know about somebody the more you trust them**. Remember to tell them about your guarantee and at the end of your letter, **always ask for action at the very end**.

Once you have written the letter and your tests indicate that it is successful, you can continue using it for years to come. Only change copy when it is no longer profitable, although you should keep testing new approaches using your existing copy as a 'control.' If your mailshot or website sales letter is working, keep using it until your tests produce a more successful version. **Never change your copy because you are tired of it, or because you want to go with something new and exciting**. You will get tired of it long before your prospects will, simply because you see it everyday.

## **Selling Secrets of Million Pound Sales Letters**

Regardless of what you're trying to sell, you really can't sell it without 'talking' with your prospective buyer. And in attempting to sell anything by mail or online, the sales letter is how and when you talk to your prospective customer.

All winning sales letters 'talk' to the prospect by creating an image in the mind of the reader. They:

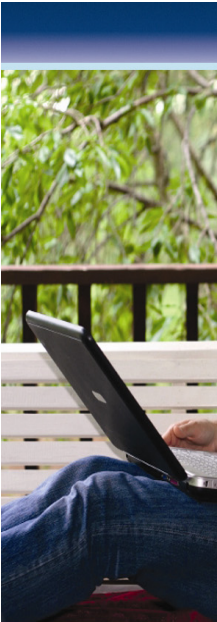
First - set the scene by appealing to a desire or need using descriptive, evocative language ("Imagine yourself sipping champagne on the deck of your own private yacht....")

Second - flow smoothly into the 'visionary' part of the sales pitch by describing in detail how wonderful life will be and, how good the prospect is going to feel after he's purchased your product.

This is the body of a sales letter. Overall, a winning sales letter follows a time-tested and proven formula:







- Get a person's attention
- Get a person interested in what you can do for them.
- Make them desire the benefits of your product so badly their mouth begins to water. Paint the picture of the benefits they will enjoy if they buy.
- Demand action from your reader! Tell them to send for whatever it is you're selling without delay - any procrastination on their part might cause them to lose out.
- Interweave all of this with solid, honest facts. Add a no quibble refund guarantee and a PS – and there you are!

Regardless of the length of your sales letter, it should do one thing, and that's sell and sell hard!

## Letter Style Tips

### Write Only Short Sentences

Your sentences should be short and punchy, with no more than 17 words. Your copy should look pleasing to the eye, but don't make it look symmetrical and pretty as this is boring to the reader. Your letter needs to look quite busy, as people are used to being bombarded with many things at once when watching TV. If it's plain they will lose interest more quickly.

### Write Short Paragraphs

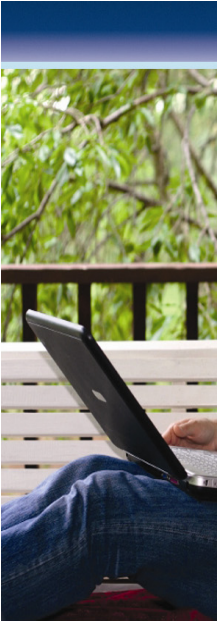
Write short paragraphs with lots of spaces, like in this course, as this makes it easier to read. Keep your paragraphs to seven lines or less. If your paragraphs are longer than this, break them up into two or three shorter ones. This is all in the name of easy reading.

Don't use double spacing between each line as this not only doubles the length of your letter unnecessarily, but also makes it hard for the reader to see where one paragraph ends and the next begins. Your letter will lose impact. Only double space between paragraphs. This paragraph is double-spaced. It is tedious to read.

### Margin Notes

Hand written marginal notes of no more than four or five words per note can be very effective as they add contrast, attract attention and make your letter more personal. Contrast is important in letters to make them look appealing to the eye at a glance. This is gimmicky though, so use it sparingly.





There is nothing more boring than a letter that is symmetrical, has paragraphs that are all the same length and no subheads to break up the text. It makes your letter look dull, dull, dull. Vary the length of your paragraphs, from a single sentence to emphasise their importance, to ones spanning up to five lines.

Most importantly with marginal notes, you are aiming to give the impression that you read through your letter and added extras in the margins that you didn't think of as you were typing it; then using this same pen, you signed your name with a flourish. Therefore, the ink of your marginal notes needs to be the same colour (process blue) as your signature.

The disadvantage of marginal notes is that your letters will be more expensive to print because the job becomes two colour. Marginal notes are not suitable for all letters. Also, most people know the margin notes are printed on, and so they feel slightly conned. Fashions change. Test this against the same copy without marginal notes.

### **~~Cross Out Words~~**

Cross out words or phrases using a felt tip pen for emphasis. For example, have the old price of £49.97 crossed out and next to it type the new price of £29.97. When you do this, readership and response go up markedly.

### **End Each Page in the Middle of a Sentence**

When you come to the bottom of each page, make sure that your last sentence continues onto the next page. The reader will have to turn the page to finish the sentence and so is more likely to keep reading, as the brain naturally wants to complete something.

If your sentence ends on the bottom of the page, only readers who have a vested interest in doing so will turn the page and carry on reading. You want your writing to be a page-turner and this is a sneaky way of achieving this.

Write on the bottom of each page, 'please turn over' or 'go to next page'.

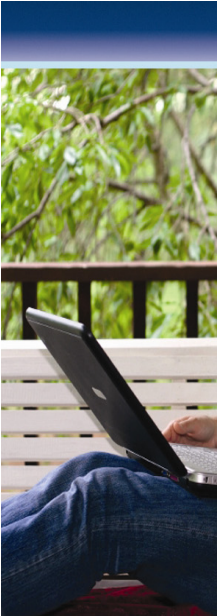
### **Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar**

A word about these: Due to the prevalence of word processor packages like Word, there is no excuse for sloppy English. All your spelling, punctuation and grammar mistakes are underlined with a wavy line and the programme then gives you advice on how to correct them. You can also just use a dictionary.

**Perfect spelling is essential.** But so long as your sentences make sense and read like a conversation, do not worry too much about grammar. What would please an English teacher doesn't necessarily make for great copy. However, good punctuation is important for adding emphasis and helping your writing make sense.

If you're not sure then get a literate friend to check your work for you, or





hire a professional proof-reader/editor. Get some books on spelling, punctuation and grammar and strive to improve your grasp of these essential principles.

**There is nothing more of-putting than riting that is riddled with speling mistakes; it looks terrible.** To your customers, you will come across as an amateur and somebody who doesn't care about the quality of their products. Is this the kind of image you want for your project?

Even the most literate person will often make innocent errors that will not be picked up by the spell checker. Words such as 'from' and 'form' are often mixed up and hard to spot when proof-reading. Similarly with there and their; too and to, lose and loose. So make sure you always read your work carefully after you have completed it. It is useful to have somebody else read it as well, as they can often spot small errors that you may have missed.

## Checklist to Help You With Writing Your Sales Letters...

- Never lie (This is the most important rule);
- If you make a claim, prove it;
- Lead with benefits, substantiate with features;
- Personalise;
- Make sure any slang or jargon is familiar to the reader;
- Reveal a minor flaw;
- Give copy news value;
- Write the way real people talk, not English professors;
- Never talk down to your audience. Look them in the eye or look up to them;
- Ask for the order;
- Make it easy for prospects to buy;
- Give an incentive to act NOW!;
- Substitute 'you' for 'I' whenever possible.

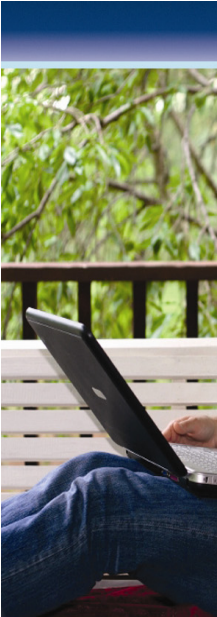
## The Guarantee

Your letter must contain a guarantee for your product or service. There are possible exceptions to this, but generally your product must have a cast iron, unconditional, no quibble, no-nonsense money-back guarantee.

Best guarantee wording:

**"If you're unhappy with the product for any reason, please return the product in any condition, within x days of receipt for a prompt and courteous refund."**





The longer the guarantee period the less returns you get. You will increase the response with a good guarantee but you must have a good product. You want a business with repeat orders from loyal customers.

You are striving for superior quality products and as long as your product lives up to your claims, then your returns should not exceed 5% on most offers. Even the best product in the world will get 5% refunds. It's just human nature. 5% of people are never satisfied. Even if you send them a crisp £50 note for just £23.97 plus £1 P&P you will get 5% refunds! They'll complain that the note was 'creased' or that it 'wasn't what they expected' or that they are 'suspicious about keeping free money.' It's a funny world!

Ideally, your guarantee should be no less than 30 days otherwise the customer will get jumpy, particularly if it's a book. You can use 60, 90 days or one year for most products. **The shorter the guarantee period, the more they rush to send it back quickly.**

**But if they think they have a year, they will relax and give the product more careful consideration.** Yes, it is irksome to receive the odd product back one year and three days after you posted it, together with a stiff note complaining that it was not satisfactory and demanding a full, immediate refund of the purchase price, plus postage! But again, that's life. There are always people like this. You just have to accept it.

**Make sure you state in your guarantee that the guarantee period begins the day they receive the product, not when they send off the order.** Otherwise people will think: "Oh I know what they're up to, they'll take 30 days to deliver the product and then that's my guarantee gone. I'm not falling for that!"

Here is an example of a typical guarantee that I use:

**"If for any reason you are not delighted with the product after you have examined it in your home for 60 days, simply return the product, in any condition, for a full, prompt and courteous refund."**

Notice the 'in any condition' part?

Why is this important?

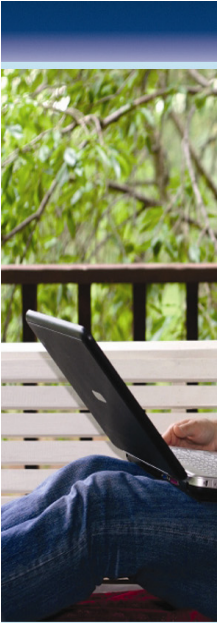
Because people are suspicious! Without this clarification, they'll think something like: "Aha! I know what they're up to. I'll send the product back and they'll tell me it is slightly scratched or creased and they'll refuse my refund. They must think I was born yesterday!"

No, I'm not exaggerating; this really is how people think.

There are the 'tyre-kickers' and the 'something for nothing' brigade. I suggest you keep records of people who continuously return products and tag their name in the computer so that you never mail to them again.







Basically, it really is quite simple...

**The more liberal your refund policy, the more NET orders you will receive after refunds.**

It's that easy! The problem is that most marketers don't see it this way. They think that they are dooming their business if they offer refunds. If your product really does live up to the expectations your customers have, you shouldn't have a problem with refunds.

More and more businesses are getting creative with their refund offers. Some companies offer a lifetime refund policy. Others offer a refund but the customer keeps a free gift. Still others offer double-the-money-back guarantees.

In general, you should make the customer feel like everything is stacked in their favour and that nothing is stacked in yours. They should feel like you are taking 100% of the risk. Your orders will start to flow in when your customers begin to feel like they have absolutely nothing to lose by ordering your product.

## **What About Having No Guarantee?**

Again I pass you over to Stuart Goldsmith who has something interesting to say on this topic:

"I have successfully sold two 'paper and ink' products that had no guarantee. These were 'Betting On A Fortune' by Gary Anderson, priced at £57, and 'Your First Hundred Million' by Dan Pena, priced at £297. They are both books about making lots of money.

Why did I decide not to offer a guarantee? With Betting on a Fortune, the manual is quite slim (37 pages) and easily photocopyable. I estimated that many people would photocopy (cheat us) and then ask for a refund. The manual was worth the money.

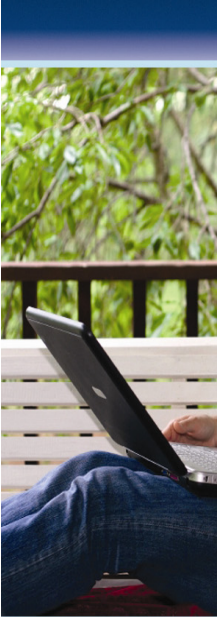
An analogy: Supposing I offer you a small slip of paper for £500 and promise you it is worth the money, but you can send it back for a refund if not delighted. You decide to take a chance.

I send you the slip of paper and on it is written "Lazy Boy, 2:30, Epsom, Saturday 19th January." You place £200 on the horse and win £1500. Was that piece of paper worth £500? You bet! Will you send it back for a refund and get another £500 on top of your winnings? **The temptation is overwhelming and 50% or more of people would do this.**

How did I get away without offering a guarantee? **I made it clear in my copy that if the prospect couldn't risk £57, then futures trading (the topic of the manual) was not for them.** And this is true. I had a valid excuse not to offer a refund.

With Dan's (excellent) book, again the temptation to read that book from cover to cover, and then get your £297 back would have proved an





overwhelming temptation. We decided not to offer a guarantee. I used a similar reason, that in order to make a hundred million (the topic of the book) they would have to take risks **and if they were unprepared to risk £297, then they shouldn't even think about getting the book.**

Notice that I had to give concrete reasons why there was no guarantee and tie it into the product. I also had to make it absolutely clear that this was a top quality product and that the customer would certainly be delighted with it, and that I had never received any complaints about it.

However, I need to make it absolutely clear to you that I was able to do this because I know the rules inside out. When and only when you are this accomplished with the rules can you begin to break them, if you get cocky and try and break them before you have mastered direct marketing the results can be disastrous.

Bear in mind that I also only sold these products to prospects that had heard of me and my company - without a guarantee it would have been difficult to convince a cold list. Plus, I only sold these two items through direct mail; newspapers and magazines would not have accepted my advert without a guarantee.

Finally, these exceptions notwithstanding, the rule is: offer cast-iron, solid guarantees with your products.”

Thanks Stuart. Okay that's it for this month. More fun 'n' frolics next time!

