

Direct Response Millions

LESSON SIX

by

Vince Stirling

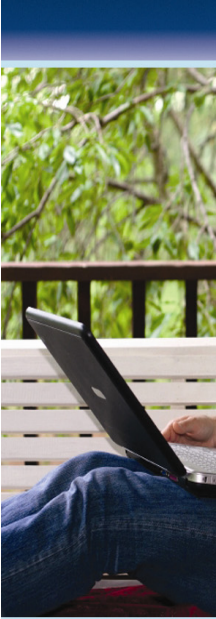
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Hello again and welcome to lesson six. Let's make a start this lesson on the important topic of 'lift letters'.

The Lift Letter

A lift letter is a short letter included in the same envelope of your main letter. It's called a lift letter because it can increase ('lift') response - **sometimes by as much as 200%**. When selling to a particular list, it is a very powerful technique to have the list owner endorse your product. To do this, he writes a one page 'lift letter' which goes on with your mailing and is sent to his list. Remember, his customers know him and love him, they have never heard of you. I have used this on many occasions and it is highly effective.

The most successful lift letters have at least one or several of these characteristics:

- Projects a different voice or tone to that of the main letter.
- Is signed by someone other than the sender of the main letter.
- Offers a new benefit, testimonial, or dramatic summary of the offer which is not in the main letter.
- Is printed on different colour paper.
- Is brief, not more than one page.
- Is signed.

Your lift letter can take many forms. The most effective types are:

- Testimonial (from a customer, celebrity, or recognised authority)
- Telegram
- News release
- Memo
- Mini letter

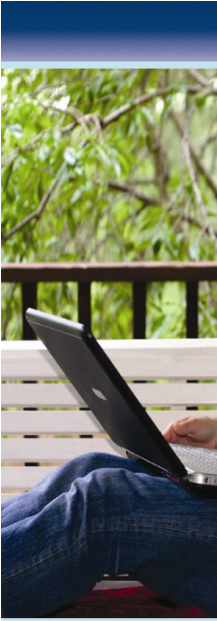
You may:

- (a) enclose a lift letter in its own envelope;
- (b) clip or staple to the main letter; or
- (c) fold and enclose in the mailing as a last minute insert.

For best results, have the lift letter printed in courier font or hand-written; do not use a typeset, slick look. Aim for a personal 'from me to you' feel and appearance. The length of your letter can be anything from 5 sentences to a full A4 page - but no longer.

Print the lift letter on different colour paper to the rest of your mailing and order form, such as pale blue, primrose or cream. Ensure that the letter is signed with a strong, legible signature in process or reflex blue.





The lift letter usually goes in front of the main sales letter. However, consider using a lift letter as a 'last ditch' attempt to overcome final objections and make the sale. In this case you add the letter right at the end. Consider using some of these headlines:

Please read only if you are still undecided

Here are the heart rending words of a well-known customer

**Frankly, I'm puzzled as to why there is even the slightest
hesitation**

Are you sceptical? Do you want more proof?

Looking for another professional's opinion?

**Did you notice on the enclosed brochure the guarantee on
page 2?**

Lift Letter Example: Seminar Offer

Dear Friend,

I heartily recommend the Ted Nicholas Marketing seminar. Why?

I've experienced Ted's programme myself. From this exposure I've learned so much about success and making money, it's tough to put all of it in a short letter. But, I can tell you this...

The way I direct market products has been forever changed. In fact, my whole approach to business has been revolutionised. I've also strengthened my people and negotiating skills. Every aspect of preparing ads and sales letters has improved. Attracting new customers, the lifeblood of any business, is no longer a problem.

Let's face it. Building wealth is important to everyone. And Ted is the best teacher in the world in my opinion. But, perhaps even more important than the financial side of life, I've learned so much about real success as a human being from Ted Nicholas.

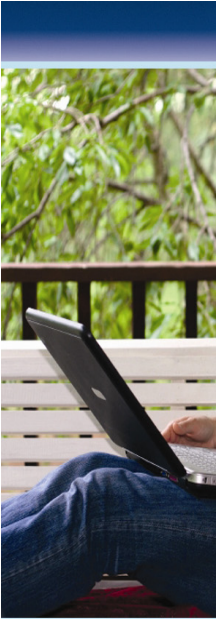
And there are many other important lessons I've learned from him. Balance between family, friends, and career. My entire family now pays more attention to our health, the greatest wealth of all. Ted, who spends at least an hour each day on enhancing his physical and mental health, has been a model for us and will be for you.

Don't miss this chance to spend time with him and his family. I urge you to do whatever is necessary to attend his 3-day seminar beginning December 2nd. And bring your employees if you are in business and your spouse, for your partner will also benefit enormously. I look forward to seeing you there.

Sincerely

Mark Layder





This letter would be placed in front of the main 16 page mailer for the seminar.

Lift Letter #2: Book Offer

Dear Bill,

As an M.D., I use and teach visualisation therapy in my practice. I consider this therapy to be more powerful than drugs or surgery. Why?

We humans have the (often under-appreciated) ability to heal ourselves using the power of our mind.

I'd like to relate a true story. You may wish to include the entire case history in your great book, *How To Fight Cancer and Win*. It may inspire your readers who can use this alternative approach to alleviate suffering and facilitate healing of virtually any condition.

Sara was brought in to see me at age 4. She was suffering from five angiomas; blood tumours behind her left eyeball. (Children are particularly good candidates for visualisation therapy because their minds are not cluttered with negatives.)

Sara's eyesight was deteriorating rapidly. The condition was extremely serious. It was apparent the eyeball would have to be removed along with the tumours. The rapidly growing tumours were constricting the optic nerve itself and stressing vital blood vessels.

I sat Sara down and explained to her as gently as I could what her problem was, and what would happen.

I began to teach Sara visual imagery. Within eleven months with continued visual imagery, Sara's vision was almost normal. Her pretty face had lost its deformed look. She is now completely cured.

Being an M.D., you might wonder how I ever became involved with visualisation therapy. After losing my eyesight due to a degenerative condition, I was forced to retire from medicine due to failing vision.

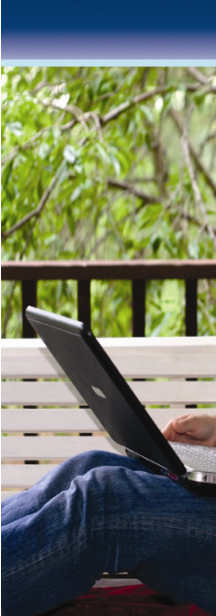
I had nothing to lose and was desperate. So I tried visualisation. I developed this visual imagery technique by practising on myself at home. I'd heard about visualisation but at first was sceptical. I thought it was outside of the realm of science. Finally I became convinced and a strong advocate of this type of treatment. But that was after I restored 75% of my eyesight!

I recommend visualisation therapy to any cancer sufferer. There simply is no risk whatsoever and the results can truly be miraculous. The power of visualisation combined with the other proven natural remedies and foods included in your well-researched book will help all readers, from the healthy to cancer sufferers.

Sincerely,

Leslie H. Salov, M.D.





Lift Letter #3: Another Seminar Offer

Vic Conant
Nightingale Conant
Long Road, Paignton
Devon TQ4 7BB

Dear Friend,

Excuse the hasty letter, but I have some exciting news for you...

The rumours are true!

Frankly, I didn't believe it would happen, but now the date is confirmed. Ted Nicholas, Peter Thomson and Stuart Goldsmith really are joining forces to give what must be the seminar of the decade on April 11th at Heathrow. How they ever got these three gurus together in one place for an entire day, defies logic!

The seminar is called Millionaire Marketing Magic and in one intensive, unique day, Ted, Stuart and Peter will disclose the marketing secrets which made them all multi-millionaires, and which could do the exactly the same for you!

Because there are only 100 places available, I felt I had to write to you immediately to let you know about this outstanding seminar in order to give you the best chance of securing a place. As soon as I heard that the seminar was definite, I arranged with the seminar organisers (Medina Ltd) to hold back all other mailings for one day to give Nightingale Conant customers a 24 hour 'unfair advantage'! There are no plans at this stage to repeat the seminar.

I urge you to read carefully the enclosed offer and to respond within 24 hours before the crowd get to hear about this.

Best wishes for your success.

Vic Conant

Lift Letter #4: Newsletter Offer

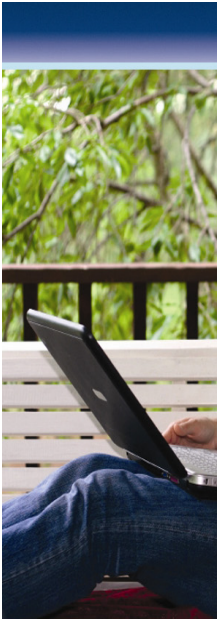
"Love or hate him... you just can't ignore him!"

Dear Friend,

In my post box every single month drop 7, yes 7, newsletters I subscribe to. Yes, I know it's a lot but I just love reading new stuff and seeing what other people are up to in the information field.

But...there's one that always, yes always...





Makes me want to take action!
Makes me frustrated at the state of the world!
And fortunately . . . makes me laugh!

Stuart Goldsmith's newsletter is a newsletter like no other newsletter I've ever seen. Let me tell you a bit about Stuart and his views and strongly urge you to take up his offer of reading 3 issues Free of Charge.

Etc. etc.....

So, let me suggest, in fact stronger than that . . .let me urge you to take up Stuart's offer, get the 3 free issues and make up your own mind.

I'm certain you'll enjoy the experience.

Kind regards

Peter Thomson

PS: Remember this is not for the faint-minded . . . Stuart tells it straight as he sees it!

That letter doubled the response to the straight mailing.

The Power of Simplicity

Above all else, you've got to include some sort of ordering coupon or form. This coupon/form has to be as **simple and easy for the prospect to fill out and return to you as you can possibly make it.**

A great many sales are lost because the order coupon is just too complicated for the would-be buyer to follow!

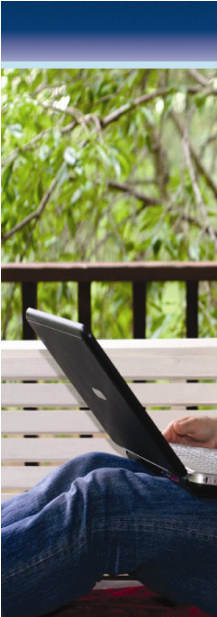
Don't get fancy! Keep it simple, and you'll find your prospects responding well.

The Order Form

An effective order form is absolutely vital to a successful sales letter. It is so important that **a poor order form can ruin an otherwise great mailshot.** On the other hand, a great order form is a simple and inexpensive way to improve the response to your offer. I have attached some order forms at the end of this lesson.

Many order forms are boring, confusing, complicated, or ugly. They do nothing to enhance sales and quite often detract from them, which is amazing considering how much work has gone into the mailshot in an effort to persuade the reader to buy. And yet if your order form puts the prospect off and they don't order, all your effort has gone to waste. There are three key reasons why order forms are so badly done. Firstly, it is because the order form is done last, instead of first. Normally when the letter is written first, the writer has exhausted the emotional energy necessary to create a powerful order form.





The second reason is that there is a natural human tendency to avoid closing the sale because we all fear rejection. As a result the instructions are timid, confusing, or absent. You should realise that by creating an order form this way you are more likely to receive rejection than if you were straightforward and asked outright for the order.

The third reason ties in to the above, in that the order form is not crafted as a sales tool. Instead it is looked upon as a 'necessary evil.'

To improve your order forms, follow this 6-step approach...

Step One - Get yourself into the right frame of mind.

Many prospects open the letter and **read the order form first before the letter**, so you need to sell with this document alone to these people. If you don't do this, your sales will be far less than they otherwise could be. **So always restate your major benefit on the order form.**

Step Two - Prepare the order form first.

Do this before the sales letter, lift letter, envelope, or brochure. The importance of this sequence is explained below.

Step Three - Make the copy exciting.

When you first start writing your sales pitch you are filled with excitement for the product and if you write the order form first, then the vitality essential to all sales success will come out in the order form.

Step Four - Make the offer clear.

By preparing the order form first, you are forced to think through all aspects of the offer early in the creative process. The result is an easy to understand offer. This clarity provides you with more natural sales power.

Step Five - Overcome fear of rejection.

Once you have created an exciting order that promotes the benefits of your product, it is far easier to overcome the natural reluctance in asking for the order, because you can see how much your product is going to benefit the prospect.

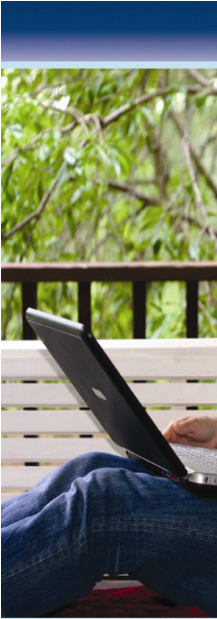
Step Six- Make the order form a sales document.

Think of your order form as a very important sales tool and not just a method of recording the order. **It is often your final opportunity to say something good about the product and so make it part of your marketing effort.**

The Perfect Order Form

The following tips will help you prepare successful order forms. Consider this to be a check list - **you do not have to incorporate every point in every form you create:**





One - Always use a headline on the order form.

A headline helps this document to stand out and gives it a feeling of importance. Many mailers omit a headline, which is a mistake. Here are some of those successful headlines used by millionaires, which you can use...

Free Trial Request
Free Examination Certificate
No Risk Order Coupon
Seminar Reservation Certificate
R.S.V.P.
Time Limited Reservation Certificate
Special Order Certificate
Free 6-Month Trial Certificate
Priority Order Certificate
Official Entry and Enrolment Certificate
Gift Certificate
Membership Application
Acceptance Card
Free Preview Issue
Send No Money
21-Day Free Trial Certificate
Acceptance Certificate
Special Reservation Certificate
No-Risk Enrolment Certificate
Free Audition Certificate
Send No Money - Offer Expires In 14 Days

Ideally avoid the use of the word 'form' altogether. Do you like filling in forms? No? Neither does anybody else.

Two - Restate the main benefit of the product.

Sometimes it's effective to include two or three benefits.

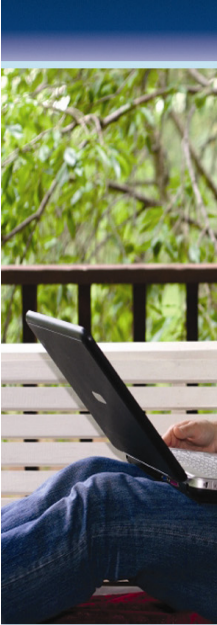
"YES, I want wealth, power and freedom in my life. Please enrol me in The Wealth Circle..."

"YES, I want a greener lawn in under half an hour. Please send me one month's supply of..."

Three - Restate the features of the product.

Features build credibility for your product, so include a complete description of it, including dimensions, weight, and the materials used in the manufacture of it.





Or if it is a book, course, or manual, repeat the size and number of pages and the total number of lessons if it is a course. For example, "The Wealth Circle is a 10-part course consisting of two A4 booklets each comprising of approximately 32 pages each."

Four - Include a photo of the product.

How do your readers know you have a product to sell?

If you include a photo it is visual proof your product exists. You can show off the quality or/and quantity. For instance, if your product is a year long course with 12 CD's and a set of 12 manuals with 6 free bonus reports, a photograph of all these pieces, will display exactly what the reader will receive.

Five - Include a photo of a person.

Depending on the product, adding an appropriate human being such as the inventor, author, doctor or person using the product can add sales appeal.

Make sure the subject is smiling warmly and making eye contact with the reader. Subject should be dressed in business clothes and, if a man, be cleanly shaven. (Facial hair can detract and reduce credibility. Studies show people with beards and moustaches are not as trusted!) Remember to always caption the photo.

Six - Dramatise any free gifts or bonuses you may offer.

The use of strong titles and descriptions can be really compelling.

Carry drama, excitement and passion for your product or service all the way through into every part of your mailing.

For example:

"I claim my two free bonuses *Words To Wealth* and *The Lazy Man's Way To Riches*. I understand they are mine to keep, even if I do not continue with my membership of *The Wealth Club*."

Seven - Include a strong guarantee.

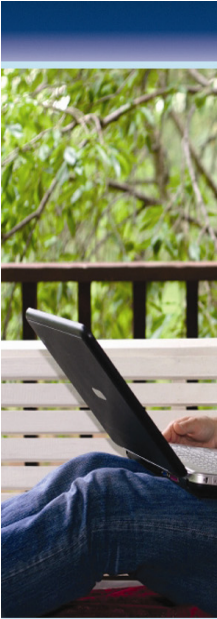
The longer the guarantee period the more orders and the less returns you will have, i.e., '90 days', or 'a full 3 months', is stronger than '21 days'. A full year is better yet.

A lifetime guarantee will give you the highest response. And as long as your product is good and lives up to all your claims; don't worry about returns. Out of the tiny minority who will think to return your product after the year's guarantee, only a small percentage will remember who they bought it from and the company's address, and so bother to return it.

For example:

"I understand that I have a full 60 days to examine *Easy French* in my





own home. If I am not entirely satisfied I may return the CD set for a full, no quibble refund. On that basis, here's my order."

Eight - Use a certificate border.

A fancy graphic look will ensure your order form is perceived by the prospect as important and so increase the likelihood that it will be retained and used.

Nine - Use a different paper colour.

Your order form should be on different colour paper (pink for example) and heavier stock to your main sales letter as this makes it stand out and gives a feeling of importance.

Sometimes using a fancier certificate paper (which your printer can supply) can add sales, particularly if the product is perceived to be of high value and where the prospect is requested to reserve their place, such as for a seminar.

Ten - Print on one side, not both.

Mail tests show that orders are higher if the order is printed on one side only of the paper. This is more expensive though. Most mailings go for economy and print double sided. This is not the most important point I have shared with you.

Eleven - Use involvement devices.

Classic devices are to use tokens that must be inserted into die cuts on the card or stamps with photos of free bonuses or gifts. The idea is that the prospect must cut out and add items to the order card. That's how the term 'involvement device' began.

Involvement devices tend to increase response simply because they include the reader. **They are expensive when mailing small quantities though.**

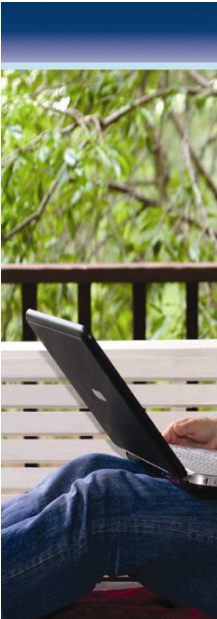
Twelve - Use window envelopes.

A label with the prospect's name and address on the order card, which serves as the address label, is a proven winner. You also make it easy to order as the customer does not have to fill out his/her name and address.

Thirteen - Perforate guarantee.

Adding a perforated dotted line to your order card so that the customer can keep the portion with the guarantee can increase response.





Fourteen - Tell the prospect exactly what to do.

Use tick boxes with

Yes please rush me __ copies of How To Get Your Parrot to Talk DVD at £28.97 each.

Fifteen - Your coupon must contain your details.

It must include your company name, address, web site, email and telephone number and give space for greater than 1 quantity of your product. If appropriate, do the calculation for the prospect and say something like one copy at £15.99, two copies at £29.98, or three copies at £47.97.

This will save them having to add it up, and saves you hassle if they add it up wrong and thus send you the wrong amount of money. Plus they are more likely to think about ordering more than one if the option is presented to them in this way.

Sixteen - Use payment tick boxes.

There must also be space on your order form for tick boxes for the prospect's method of payment, their credit card details and their name and address (very important this).

Seventeen - Fill in your own form!

To see how user-friendly your own order form is, try and fill it in yourself and get a friend to do the same. You will be amazed at how many errors you will spot between the two of you!

Eighteen - Enclose two order forms in your mail package.

This has been shown to increase your response rate by up to 20%! (i.e. from a 2% to a 2.4% response.) And it will cost you pennies to do this. A second order form allows the recipient to pass the information on to friends or colleagues.

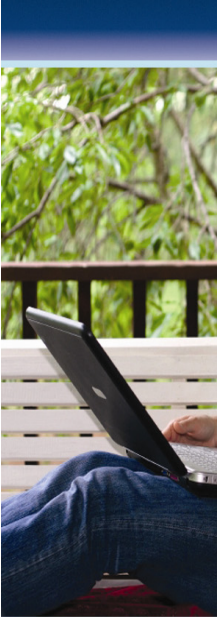
Quite often people start to fill out the order form, make a mistake and then give up because there's no space left for them to fill out their details. Whereas if there are two order forms and they go wrong on the first one, they can use the second.

Nineteen - Have your address both inside and outside the order form.

This is often a legal requirement; otherwise once a customer has posted off the form they have no note of your address.

Here is an example of an order form incorporating some of these features:





Priority Reservation Certificate

YES, I want to learn the secrets of trading futures. Please rush me one copy of *Betting on a Fortune*, by Gary Anderson at £57.00 plus £4 P&p. I understand that futures trading is risky and so there is no refund available on this product.

I enclose a cheque/PO for **£61.00** made payable to Medina Ltd.

OR: Please debit my Visa/Mastercard/Switch:

My Telephone Number is:.....

Card Number: Expires:

If Switch, please quote Issue Number: and 'Valid From' Date:

Signature:

SHIP TO:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Post Code: _____

Country: _____

REF: YF7

Place your priority order NOW by
telephoning: **01189 461246** (24 hours)
Or FAX your order on **01189 462505**

Or e-mail us on Betting@medina.demon.co.uk
SENT UNDER PLAIN COVER - ALLOW 10 DAYS

OR: Post the coupon today to:

Alithea Ltd, 12 Tilbury Close, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5JF, U.K.



Is Your Copy Any Good?

Now that you've written your sales letter, you need to know if it's any good or not. The purpose of your letter is to encourage the reader to buy. To do this you will need to convince the reader he/she will be better off as a result. If your letter does not accomplish this, determine why and rewrite it until it does.

The best way to decide if your letter contains all the ingredients for success is surprisingly simple, yet few people do it. It is the same method employed for checking spelling mistakes. **Just read it out loud.** Mistakes, confusing statements, and unclear sentences will pop right out. This will prevent you from sending poor letters.

Even better is to get someone else to read it out loud to you. Ask yourself if your letter sounds like you're talking directly from your heart, to a close friend. Give your copy to a 12-year old - if they can read and understand it, you're in good shape.

Ask yourself these questions about your copy...

- Is it hot?
- Is it exciting?
- Is it important but boring? If so, tread very carefully - either delete the offending portion or put it later in the letter;
- Is it boring? Take it out;
- Is it simple? No complicated words or phrases. The average reading age is 12.

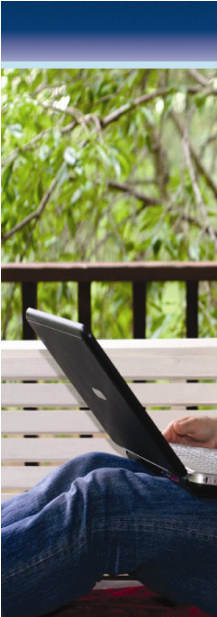
The greatest sin that you can commit when writing copy is to bore the reader. This is unforgivable and readers will simply bin your letter.

I mentioned in an earlier lesson that you should put your copy away for a week and then come back to it. This is good procedure, and if not a week, you should at least leave it for a day. This will allow you to spot any unnecessary words or phrases, exaggerations or dishonest claims. These should all be eliminated from your copy.

Read your copy out loud - does it ring true, does it excite you? Get a couple of honest friends to read it through and see if it makes them want to buy the product.

Remember: prove your claims, never lie, and don't use slang or jargon.

Your claims have to be credible - if you exaggerate then your readers will realise this and stop reading. **People don't like to be deceived.**



Remember they have no way of checking the product first before they make a purchase so if they think that your letter is false they will not risk it and toss your letter in the rubbish bin.

Your passion for your product must come out in the sales letter. Your product and free bonus must offer true value to the buyer, otherwise people won't buy. They're not trading with you out of charity. They don't owe it you to buy from you. Nobody owes you anything. **You must believe in your product with every fibre of your being, otherwise your sales letter will lack conviction.**

A lot of mainstream advertising is exaggerated and that is why it is often ineffective. It's just not believable, and so the company lacks credibility in the eyes of the customer. Don't fall into this trap when writing a sales letter.

Delivery

Never put 4-6 weeks delivery on your order form. This is way, way too long. The number one customer complaint is waiting weeks for the order. **Ideally, you should send out the order the same day that you receive it.** This will cut down on customer complaints and refunds - when people have to wait ages for an order they have time to decide that they don't want it after all. **Always offer next day delivery upon request.**

If for some reason you cannot fulfil the order within a few days of receiving it, because the product is out of stock or similar, you should send a letter first class to the customer apologising for this, tell them when they can expect to receive the order and give them the option of cancelling. Fewer people will cancel if given this option. This is called a 'hold' or 'holding' letter.

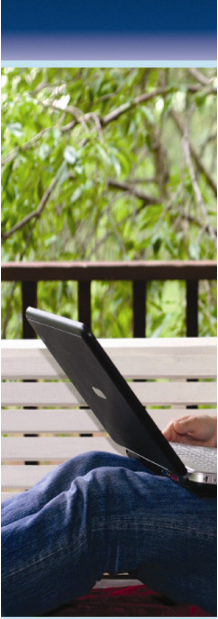
Make it easy for people to buy from you. If you wait until their cheque clears before you ship their order you will lose a fortune in satisfied customers. Okay, so you will get a few debtors whose cheques bounce, and whose money you would otherwise have lost, but it makes your service far too slow and cumbersome, and is not worth the little money you will save in comparison to the big bucks you will make by having a fast, efficient service.

The period when your customer is hottest for your products is within the first few minutes of receiving their order from you. **Make the most of it.** When you send out the customer's order include a sales letter offering them another product, possibly at a discount price if they act immediately. You will be delighted at the number of repeat sales you get.

How to do Research for Your Sales Letters

When you know what you're selling, who's buying, why they buy and how best to make your "pitch" to them, you'll make lots of money.





There is a difference between research and testing, and you need to do both.

Once I have a product or service idea that seems to “fit” an already established market, it’s time to do my homework - market research.

“Market research” is a big buzz phrase that big media advertising agencies love to use. The main reason they love it so much is that they have discovered it is an effective tool to extract huge sums of money from “fat cat” clients.

Any time an entirely new or altered product is about to be developed, it’s time for market research, time to write that king-sized cheque so they can do their “vital research.”

I’m not knocking the idea of research; it is essential. I just believe that many agencies make it into a joke - an expensive joke for their clients.

I remember being in Chicago on business several years ago when a pretty young lady stopped me to enquire if I would answer a few quick questions. Since she had already gotten my attention, I said “Sure.”

She proceeded to ask me what make of vacuum cleaner I had in my home. “An old Hoover,” I replied. “Are you happy with it?” she asked.

“I guess so,” I replied, “but I personally avoid using it whenever I can. However, sometimes my wife insists.”

“When you do use it,” she asked, “do you find it to be rather heavy?” “Well, sort of,” I said.

“Would you like to use a machine that cleans just as well, costs less, and is lightweight?” she beamed. “Well, I guess that would be nice,” I agreed. “Great! Thanks for the information!” She concluded.

This is marketing research? NO way, Jose! **However, some hapless client actually was paying an agency that hired this gal, and no doubt hundreds of others, to ask silly questions.**

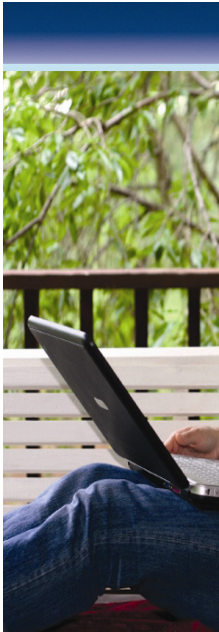
Don’t waste your time and money asking if people want something better or cheaper. Of COURSE they do! Instead, spend your money wisely by introducing the better product to the masses, and make money by doing so.

How to Test Your Sales Letters

Once my research gives me a target market for my products or service, it’s time to test, and test some more.

We must discover:





1. Which exact media will work best;
2. What price will yield the best bottom-line;
3. What is the best product or service to offer new buyers, so that I can upgrade them to multiple-buyer status.

Once I have found the most productive, profit-producing market, how I price my product is a crucial consideration. Don't sell yourself short.

Far more people fail because they under-price than those who over-price. It's easier to lower prices and thereby create a savings promotion, than to raise prices and drive potential customers away.

Test everything significant, but test only one major item at a time.

Remember, people do not care about how great, wonderful, or successful you are personally. What they do care about is what unique benefit, advantage, service, or personal enhancement you can offer to their self interest that the "other guy" does not.

They want to know how you are going to improve their life.

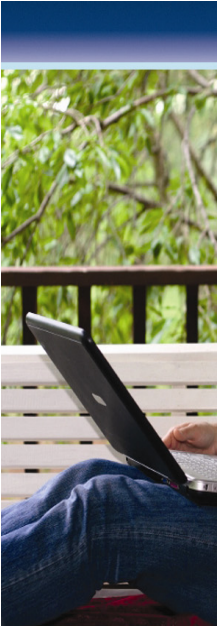
Test, Test, Test

The secret of direct marketing success is constantly to test. I will reveal here a really effective testing strategy so that you will know which are the most important elements of your direct mail package to test. Here are the eleven most significant elements in order of importance:

1. List;
2. Offer;
3. Price;
4. Headline on letter;
5. Lift letter;
6. Letter;
7. Teaser copy on envelope;
8. Guarantee;
9. Bonuses;
10. Order form;
11. Graphics.

Obviously we could debate all day about the exact order of these. Let's look at them in more detail:





One - The List

First comes the list, no question. A great offer to a poor list will bomb. E.g., this offer to a list of Green Peace Activists: "Test Drive The New BMW 735i Tomorrow - The Luxury Car of the 21st Century."

Or this, to a list of heavy-rock concert ticket buyers: "Fifty of the World's Greatest Operatic Arias on One CD - Yours Free When You Subscribe to Opera World Magazine."

Or this to high-rise flat dwellers: "Half Price Lawnmowers + Free Five Garden Shrubs of Your Choice!"

Use of the wrong list will result in zero – yes, ZERO orders, no matter how good the sales copy, how keen the price and how good the offer.

In contrast, a mediocre offer to a great list will succeed.

Two - Offer

It should be obvious that if the offer is basically no good (Genuine Mud From World War 1 Flanders Fields - Yours To Cherish and Keep) then everything else is irrelevant. To the prospect, the product you are offering must have a value that they perceive to be higher than the amount they are paying for it. The question in the minds of all prospects that you must answer is 'what is the offer and of what benefit is it to me'? **Simplify your offer as much as possible.**

A good way to strengthen your offer is to compare it with other purchases your prospect will be familiar with. For example, let's suppose you are offering a course at £19 a month – you could make the cost seem low by comparing it to the price of a few beers.

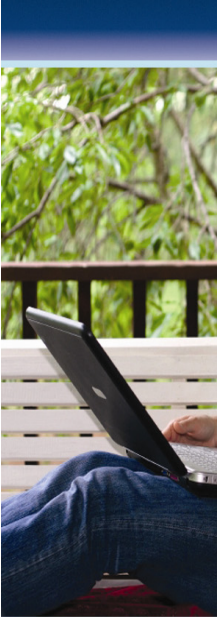
Your offer can be perceived as a terrific bargain when carefully compared to the price of a new suit, a night on the town or a meal at a favourite restaurant.

Here is an example of copy that makes a valid comparison. "What would you expect to pay for such a product? About £75?, or £50?, or less than the cost of a special evening for two at your favourite restaurant? No, it won't even cost you 50% of this. You can have XXX product for only £29.97!"

Three - Price

Next comes the price. **If this is wrong, no amount of copywriting will save you.** For example: "Genuine Pacific Fresh Coconuts Delivered to Your Home - Just £497 Each." You are wasting your time even writing copy which starts; "Imagine the turquoise blue pacific lapping on a sun-drenched, bone-white beach. Imagine paradise. Imagine..." Forget it! You've lost 'em with that price. **The only thing they're imagining is being £497 lighter, whilst left holding a coconut...**





Your customers are the most qualified for testing the ideal price for a product, not you. **The best price is often as much as your customers are willing to pay for it.** Most direct marketers make the classic error of doing little or no price testing.

Sometimes a higher price **pulls better than a lower one** if the product is well presented to the right audience; you will not only make more money but will sell more units. At other times you will gain a higher profit at a lower price.

Sometimes the profitability of a product is about equal at a higher or a lower price. When this occurs you will need to decide what is most important. If you want more customers because you have plenty of back-end products to offer, then you would go with the lower price. This allows you to more rapidly grow your own list. If you prefer to handle less units, but still want a high profit, then you would go with the higher price.

If you were considering selling your product for less than £100, then I suggest you test four price points. The prices need to be different enough from each other to give a clear cut reading of profitability.

Your prices might be £37.97, £57.97, £77.97 and £97.97. Prices that end in the digit 7 have more sales appeal than any other number. **Keep everything else in your mailing exactly the same.**

Test each price using 5,000 names and then assuming you had a good enough response, roll-out using the most profitable price.

Supposing someone finds out that they paid more for their product? This is very rare indeed. If it does happen, simply send the customer a letter of explanation telling them the truth - you were price testing. Apologise in your letter for any confusion, and then send a full refund of the purchase price paid, allowing the customer to keep the product with your compliments. If the product is a subscription or standing order, refund the difference of what was paid at the higher price.

Four - Headline on Letter

You can use the teaser copy on the envelope as your headline, or create a new one that is congruent with the teaser and the entire offer. It is perfectly acceptable to repeat the teaser copy and I often do so, however, on many of my mailings the headline is different from the teaser.

For example...

"How To Get Enthusiastic Applause, Even A Standing Ovation - Every Time You Speak."

The headline on the sales letter was the subhead used in the original space advert as follows:





"Leadership Today Requires That You Are An Outstanding Public Speaker"

In the example above the subhead is strong enough to be a headline; your subheads need to be like this as well.

Five - Lift Letter

Replacing a weak lift letter with a stronger one can improve sales results. Test your mailing with and without a lift letter. A properly done lift letter will always significantly out perform a mailing sent without a lift letter.

Six - Sales Letter

Establishing credibility is the challenge to writing your letter (as well as all advertising copy). It must be written with honest conviction. And passion. You must persuade and practically compel the prospect to take the action you request.

Seven - Teaser copy on the Envelope

This one is the easiest to change as well as the lowest cost, but because it is the first part of your mailshot that the customer sees the effects can be very rewarding.

A good teaser can improve your response rate, and all that was required was the extra effort in creating a new teaser.

On every mailing that you do; test at least one new teaser against your control. Your control is your current mailshot (letter, headline, offer, etc.) that you are making money on. Here is an example of two mailings using a new teaser but all other elements were identical to the control.

"Discover Today's Best Business Turnaround Strategies"
(Envelope A)

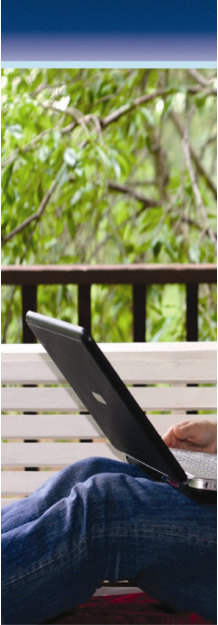
"How To Get Very, Very Rich Turning Around A Business"
(Envelope B)

Envelope B pulled best by 271%!



Eight - Guarantee

Test different guarantee periods for their increased response, over the number of tyre kickers or 'something for nothing' brigade you may attract. Generally the longer the guarantee, the more orders and the fewer returns you will get. Here is an effective way to word your guarantee:



Money-Back Guarantee

After you have the product for a full year, if for any reason you are not completely delighted, return it to us in any condition and receive a full, prompt and courteous refund.

The words 'prompt and courteous' are extremely important as they help to build credibility.

Other effective titles for your guarantee are:

Ironclad Guarantee

No-Risk Guarantee

You can also offer a conditional guarantee. This might result in fewer orders but more qualified long-term clients.

Changing the wording of a guarantee can improve response to your offer.

Nine - Bonuses

When I first started out, I once offered a special report (that wasn't selling well) as a free bonus. The response to my offer dropped markedly when I did so. **In other words, I was getting better sales *before* I added the free bonus.**

Remember the golden rule: If you can't sell it, you can't give it away!

One of the most successful and fun free bonuses was a miniature replica of a Rolls Royce delivered to the customer's office. The headline offering rentals of the marketing guru's mailing list to direct marketers was "How To Get A New Rolls Royce Free Just For Testing A Hot New Mailing List." The cost was over £70 per unit but was well worth it.

Use bonuses properly and your mail results will soar.

Ten - Order Form

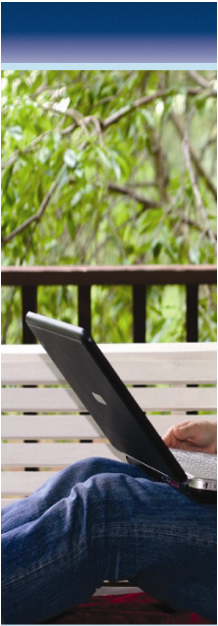
When writing your order form, assume that the prospect will look at it first as many people do. Ask yourself: 'Does my order form alone excite the prospect enough to close the sale?'

Testing the order form is an important part of any mailing. Add vitality and benefits and watch your sales explode.

Eleven - Graphics

This is definitely the least important part of any mailing, so tinker with this when everything else is as good as you can get it.





Good graphics can slightly improve the response rate of an otherwise successful mailing, but they won't turn a bomb into a success. The words are more important than anything else in copy, and apart from sourcing a suitable photo I would leave other graphics to a graphic artist, or preferably leave them out altogether.

You don't need a graphic artist to produce a successful letter. Personally I've never used one, and I've made millions of pounds out of my letters. Watch graphic artists *very* carefully. They usually have zero sense of what makes a good sale; they are mainly concerned with how pretty something looks. They prefer Pantones to profits!

All the graphic artist is required to do is to enhance the feel and pulling power of the copy. That is what a good one will do. A bad one will make your letter look 'arty' and it will bomb. Graphic designers who can help improve direct mail results are a rare breed, so my advice is to leave well alone.

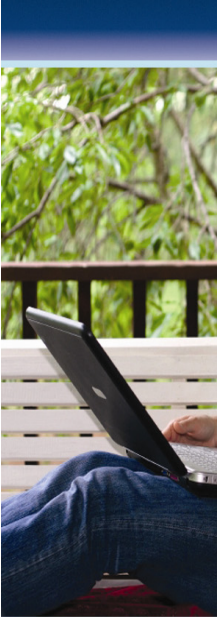
What to Test First?

Don't fall into the trap of trying to test too many of these elements at the same time, because you cannot be certain which one affected your test. The only way to be certain that the information you gain from your test is valid i.e. the influence of any one element is to... **test one thing at a time!**

Common Mistakes to Avoid in Sales Letters:

- No headline on letter;
- Not enough benefits;
- No P.S.;
- No signature, or signature is a squiggle;
- Black or other colour than blue signature;
- Typeset, slick-looking lift letter;
- No guarantee;
- Weak teaser or headline;
- Exaggerated claims (you must establish credibility);
- Confusing mailing (lots of separate pieces, offer not clear, etc.);
- Copy is too short - not enough reasons to buy;
- Copy is boring;
- Long paragraphs - should be five sentences or less;





- Few or no subheads;
- No free bonus;
- No close;
- Copy doesn't flow logically from one paragraph to next;
- Disrespectful of reader, or presumptuous, "I have no idea what your income is...", "You're probably broke right now...", "I'm guessing you're pretty cack-handed at DIY just like me...";
- No price testing;
- Weak or non-existent bonuses;
- Too many type faces, too much fancy graphics.

The Role of Brochures

You may want to include a colour brochure with your sales letter to reinforce the sale if this is appropriate to the product. Providing the materials you're enclosing are the best quality, they will generally reinforce the sale for you.

But, if they are of poor quality, look cheap and don't complement anything, it will definitely class you as an independent home-worker. The same is true if you hand-stamp your name/address on these brochures.

This is where spending time on developing your business image pays dividends. Once you have created a good strong image through your business name and logo plus motto if desired, you carry it through onto every mail piece you send out in that mailing.

So whenever possible, and so long as you have really good brochures to send out, have your printer run them through his press and print your business image on them before you send them out. You want your prospect to think of you as his supplier, the business or company and not just another mail order operator.

Sure, you can get by with less expense but you'll end up with fewer orders and in the end, less profits.

See you next time!



Trial Reservation Certificate

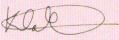
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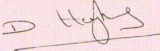
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