

THREE LITTLE WORDS TO IMPROVE YOUR ADVERTISING 1000%! by Susan Carter

Everyone is looking for the magic formula to improve the effectiveness of advertising. It's tough out there. Competition is fierce. And, for the smaller company, a smaller budget can often be the demise of an effective campaign hen up against a larger company that can afford to invest in more ads, bigger ads, and high tech generated ads. But here's the good news: having a bigger budget to spend doesn't make an ad better! It doesn't automatically get people to buy the product or service. YOU have the power to compete. And all it takes is for you to remember these three little words:

CUSTOMERS BENEFIT NOW!

No, that's not the headline I'm telling you to use in your next ad. It is the concept formula I want you to use when you create (or someone else creates) your next ad. Regardless of the words you use in your ad, these three elements **MUST** exist to make it most effective. You **MUST**:

- **Talk directly to your CUSTOMERS.**
- **Tell them the BENEFIT they will receive.**
- **Place urgency (NOW) on their response time.**

CUSTOMERS One of the biggest mistakes advertisers make is to talk about themselves and their products rather than talking about the CUSTOMER and what he/she gains by buying the product (or service). Potential customers don't want to know about you; potential customers want to know how what you do or sell benefits them. Instead of focusing on you and your company, focus on the customers and their needs.

BENEFIT If you do not make it clear -- in the headline -- what benefit the reader receives, then there is no reason for that reader to continue on with the ad. You **MUST** focus on what the reader (customer) is going to GAIN (benefit) by using your product or service.

If you've ever been involved in sales, you know the acronym WIIFM (What's In It For Me?). Potential buyers want to know how what you have benefits them. In order to tell customers "what's in it" for them, you need to understand the difference between a feature and a benefit. A feature is something that your product does or has (for instance, a telephone may have touch tone or pulse dialing; call waiting or voice mail...these are features). A benefit is how those features help the buyer. Instead of saying, "Our new whippersnapper phone offers automatic remote forwarding," say, "With automatic remote forwarding; **YOU** will never miss another important call!" You've got to give them the WIIFM!

NOW To move readers to act immediately, give them a reason to do so! Incentive works wonders in advertising. For instance, to make the example used above better, amend the headline to say, "With automatic remote forwarding, **YOU** will never miss another important call! Order by January 15th and receive your first month of service **FREE!**"

Now, there's not only a reason to contact you, but a reason to contact you NOW. That free month of service may cost you a little up front, but what is the cost of losing a customer who never got around to contacting you because he/she has nothing to lose by putting it off?

Here's another example. Let's use you and your buying habits to demonstrate the effectiveness of each of these ads for the same offer. YOU are the buyer. You're reading through a page of computer ads. Which headline would most attract your attention?

*At CompuGlitch, We Focus on Customer Satisfaction--and Achieve It.
We'll Give You a Great Deal on Your Next Computer Purchase.*

*At CompuGlitch, We Offer a 10% Discount on all Computers Purchased in
the Month of February.*

Purchase Your Computer by February 15th and Save Up to \$300.00!

Let's critique these three headlines from the buyer's perspective.

Headline #1 is focused on the seller (At CompuGlitch, we focus...) which means nothing to the reader. This headline tells us what the company is focused on: achieving customer satisfaction. Quite frankly, as a consumer, I expect nothing less, so this self-serving declaration is meaningless. You are wasting my time. The offer (a Great Deal) also tells me nothing specific. If I'm inclined to read the ad further, I might find out what that great deal consists of, but I'll probably glance at the other headlines first to see which ads I want to read further.

Headline #2 is still focused on the seller (At CompuGlitch, we offer...), but the 10% discount is a good start at demonstrating a benefit. A 10% discount might be worth pursuing--and I have all of February to think about it. Although better than headline #1, this too can be more powerful.

Headline #3 is focused solely on readers (Purchase Your...) and the benefit has been turned into an actual dollar amount. By determining what the greatest amount of savings will be with that same 10% discount (for our purposes we'll assume a \$3,000 computer purchase is feasible; 10% of that is \$300.00) the actual dollar figure of \$300.00 sounds like a whole lot more than 10%.

So, in headline #3, we meet all three criteria of the formula:

CUSTOMERS (Purchase Your Computer) **BENEFIT** (Save Up to \$300.00) **NOW** (by February 15th).

Once you know how your business benefits your customers, and you begin to focus on the CUSTOMERS BENEFIT NOW formula, you can write ad headlines that will increase reader response--and start watching your profits soar!

Coffee News of Scottsdale Can Help -Call Patrick Lyons Today--602-323-1111