

7 Copywriting Revelations

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Preface

The term "copywriting" doesn't accurately describe what I or other pro copywriters actually do. It is not just a matter of writing well. Copywriting is a short term for what is probably most accurately described as "salesmanship in print" and a full-fledged direct-response copywriter is a combination of sales tactician, marketing strategist, propagandist, researcher, and communicator. Lots of other stuff too. We tend to be creatures of diverse interests, talents, and curiosities. Just as with all professional persuaders the most important skill a copywriter can have is the ability to listen, to all sorts of people - because if a sales message is out-of-step with what people really want it won't sell.

Were I motivated to do so I could write several books on the topics explained here. But to write and publish volumes on the obscure subtleties of selling in print is not a likely profitable use of my time - and unless your intention is to become a professional copywriter yourself learning all about them may not be wise use of yours. My objective here is just to expose a bit more than the tip of the iceberg to potential clients for my writing and consulting services.

How Far Down This Rabbit Hole Will You Go?"

To increase your sales I.Q. the first thing you need to realize is this: a merely academic understanding of "why people don't buy" is not enough! You need to have it in your bones, walk a mile every day, mentally, in your target-customer's shoes so you can find out what they really want and help them get it.



You realize there are millions of dollars just begging for you to claim them. You also realize that if you simply had the right message thousands of people would gleefully open their wallets with zombielike compliance and send you vast sums of money. You also realize that while you have the capacity to deliver incredible value and joy to these people you don't have that ability because you aren't in a position, presently, to communicate that ability clearly to them.

YOU are getting smarter already:

Much of today's marketing fails to communicate - and the basic fixes are actually things you could do yourself... in fact, right now you should go to the top of this page and give your name and email address so I can email you a link to download my smoking hot report which reveals dozens of improvements you could implement yourself to start making more money.

There's just one little "catch"...

Do-it-yourself marketing is great stuff, if you have the time to pursue excellence in it yourself. But, realistically, running a business competently involves customer service, management, and even manufacturing, so much of it in fact that to study marketing and copywriting with the dedication it requires is really quite a challenge.

When you desperately need a full-scale transformation finding the time to research and develop the expertise to do all of this yourself is a MAJOR challenge.

If you are like most business owners you simply don't have the time resources to become the marketing expert you need to grow your business beyond its current limitations, creating the kind of explosive growth most entrepreneurs dream of but few achieve.

Most marketing stinks. I mean it really reeks!

Revelation #2

The 7 Subtle Barriers To The Sale

(That's a Lot and we're still only on Revelation #2!)

The majority of small-business marketing efforts today abjectly fail to punch through what I call "**the seven walls of consumer resistance**".

These seven walls are very real barriers to your business growth in today's marketplace. You may be familiar with them all because you are a consumer yourself and you use them yourself to "filter" marketing messages - but knowing what they are and how to overcome them in your sales message are very different things.

1. General slack-jawed apathy

The marketing copy fails to awaken interest in the prospect. Imagine your prospect as an incredibly slothful slack-jawed couch potato whose inherent motivation to do anything to make his life better is at the level of a crustacean.

2. Lack of understanding

Imagine your prospect as a dull student, wearing a dunce cap. The truth is your prospects are only giving your material a fraction of their brain-energy. While they might actually be intelligent, if you make them work any harder than necessary to comprehend your offer your sales will suffer - people prefer not to think)

3. What's in it for me?

Imagine your prospect as incredibly selfish to the point of arrogance - because when doing online marketing you have little ability to win him over with joviality or faux-friendship, manipulative sales tactics to be sure, but still effective in face-to-face selling. Today's prospect is in control - he doesn't need you to educate him about your industry because he can Google it and often comes to your offer with a level of self-interested savvy that would frighten old-school sales-reps ... and his one question is "what's in this for me?" Your marketing needs to address this with power and authority to even get the interest of this new breed of buyer.

4. Fear of being ripped-off

You don't get very far in life without getting ripped-off... and today consumers are very wary of internet peddlers, even while they embrace

the internet and spend more and more money on it every day they are also paranoid to a fault about fraud.

In fact many are less-likely to even agree to give you an email address today than they were in the past. It's just reality, so at every stage your marketing needs to offer reassurance and consistency so the process "feels safe".

5. Decision reluctance

As a business owner yourself you are in an elite class of people - your results depend on your ability to make decisions in a timely manner. For most wage-earning people who do not own businesses or do not work in high-pressure careers where quick decisions are necessary, will hem-and-haw over the smallest manner.

As a business owner you value your time and make decisions quickly and often on less-than-complete information, just as firefighters, surgeons and military people must. For most consumers however making a decision is a an intimidating commitment and they will avoid it unless they are absolutely persuaded it is essential they take action.

Basically, most people need a kick in the pants to make up their minds.

Example of decision reluctance: The chinese communist regime in the 1950s did extensive testing with American prisoners of war. They found that by isolating and confining a small portion of the prisoner population (the decision makers) the rest were not decisive by nature and would make no attempt to escape. Only 10% of the prisoners were capable of making a split-second decision to seize an escape opportunity.

When these leaders were removed from the general prison population and jailed, the rest were docile as lambs.

The question is not whether or not your prospects are reluctant decide to buy from you, the question is how your business is going to overcome this considerable barrier.

6. Reluctance to part with money

Let's face it - one of the major reasons people don't buy is because they have limited financial resources; when they choose to buy from you they are eliminating other options for spending their money, so they want to make a wise decision in using their resources.

Even most wealthy people are judicious in how they spend money - such habits are usually part of how they got to where they are.

Aside from the prospect who is a knee-jerk tightwad, usually to his detriment, there is the very real factor that in general you need your offer

to be perceived as more valuable than the asking price.

7. Reluctance to commit time

Your prospect is busy, or thinks he is, and the first thing you need to do is convince him it is worth his time to even understand and consider your offer, much less make a decision to buy.

Even when you offer valuable free information many people will not make the time to go through it, just as you are right now weighing in your mind whether you want to go down the rabbit hole with me and even read my entire offer, much less make time for a consultation.

Furthermore, your prospect is aware that the more time he dedicates to exploring your offer the more he will get caught in small commitments and the more likely he will be persuaded to part with his money. Unless you convince him otherwise, he may refuse to make time to consider your offer as a avoidance behavior in order to not spend money or avoid the discomfort of having a selling conversation with you or your employees.

As bizarre as these psychological factors are they are very real obstacles your marketing must overcome, like climbing a tall mountain, in order to succeed in today's marketplace.

Because most of your competition is only peripherally-aware at best of these obstacles you have an advantage of competitive intelligence you've gained right now. This advantage must be acted-upon to get you any great benefit.

Does it seem like a lot of work to create the kind of marketing system that overcomes these factors?

Absolutely. It is.

And because it is work to do it most of your competition may be effectively nullified in your prospect's minds when you do. In fact overcoming these factors is a critical guiding objective in creating the kind of marketing machine that can make you wealthy in today's marketplace.

It takes skill to do it well. Skill takes time to get and if you are absorbed in day-to-day operations you may not have the spare time to burn the midnight oil to do your marketing right.

A fresh perspective can expose catastrophic weaknesses before you waste your time and money promoting marketing information people don't understand and don't respond to. Instead of acting to get your product they pause, lost in a fog of inertia.

"It's The Offer, Stupid!"



The greatest copywriter in the world would have a real challenge selling fish-flavored ice-cream...

...which is another way of saying:

If people don't want it, a lot, then you won't sell much of your product.

Sometimes you can feel it in your gut if you've got a loser. Be straight with yourself; if you are hesitant to bring a skilled copywriter onto your team because you think you "don't want to risk" chances are it's because you know you have an offer without much of a market.

If there is one golden rule of direct-response marketing it is **Never Fall In Love With Your Product!**

This is hard to do, of course. I'm a writer - and I personally think I'm borderline-brilliant but as a marketer I know that my own opinion of my writing won't make me money - it's only when the stuff is relevant to what the buyer wants that sales happen.

For long-format salesletter copywriting around 30% of the success of the offer is based in the copywriting and getting the appeal right. That leaves a whopping 70% to matching the offer to the recipient and making the kind of offer that gets attention.

Because sales copywriting is the lowest-pressure form of selling there is, many success factors must converge for a direct-response promotion to win. The big advantage is that a winning offer is SCALABLE. When you develop an offer that "converts" profitably on a small-scale you can expand the offer to a large scale pretty quick and either make a lot of money quickly, or, if you are very fortunate, find you have an offer with "legs" and it continues to be profitable for many months or even years.

As long as you haven't cherry-picked your numbers when testing a small sample will give you a general idea of how well the offer will do on a much bigger scale.

The major reason to use salesletters instead of sales-personnel is because, on a massive scale a winning salesletter leverages the salesmanship of the copywriter in such a way that effective salescopy is an investment that will pay for itself many times over.



**"No Matter How Unique or Original
Your Business or Idea Is, You've Got
The Kind Of Competition Your
Grandpappy Never Did In His Little
Corner Shop!"**

Your business is in competition not only directly with other vendors to win business, but also within the great barrage of information overwhelming every person you want to sell to, every day.

In short: Your marketing is competing for peoples' mental and emotional involvement, not just their limited dollars.

No matter how great you think your product is the chances are extremely high you have entrenched competitors to contend with. When you launch a new product category you are the innovator with upstarts chewing on your heels - when you are the upstart you need to give customers a reason to buy from you and not the leader.

It's almost always best to be the first to market and create the category - but chances are pretty high that's not you.

The upstart faces the task of **differentiation** from the older, more established product. There are several ways to do this, but chances are finding that USP (unique selling proposition) won't come easily to you because you haven't been trained to find or create it.

Locating and defining your product's USP is perhaps the most important job a copywriter does. The technical part of writing copy, the "bag of tricks" - the language, structure, ploys and gambits - are all subservient to the power of your product's perceived advantage to the buyer... and while great sales copy can turn a winner into a breakthrough, it is the appeal of the "talented" product that trumps talented copywriting.

In summary - it's far easier to sell a winner of a product to a people who want and need it than it is to sell a weak product with superior salesmanship or copywriting. My advice? Get or create that winning product, then hire me to blast your sales through the roof.



“The Story ain’t the whole story, Bubba”

So You've Heard That Facts Tell and Stories Sell?

It's true.

Stories do sell - because they incite curiosity - but that's only the first element of story-selling, and the easiest to visualize working.

Yet if you've been working to sell goods in the REAL MARKETPLACE you know that homilies and platitudes belong in charming old books.

Like most 2-bit wisdom, "facts tell, stories sell" only touches the tip of the iceberg - and while it's a charming fable, in practice alone it's about as useful to a copywriter as a green apple to a starving beggar with no teeth.

Stories entertain. Because marketers are more in the entertainment business than ever before (just watch late-night long-format commercial and you'll see how entertainment, even corny stuff, is a powerful selling method) your chances for a successful direct-response ad increase when your ad is written to engage as much as it is to sell.

... Not The Whole Story...

Here's why - we humans are hard-wired to listen and enjoy stories, but as consumers today we are conditioned with a gigantic sales resistance - even when we accept and understand advertising for what it is our default reaction is NO so often that it's just not good enough anymore to hope you reach buyers who both run a less-skeptical mental program and also have money to spend.

The Challenge of Breakthrough Advertising Results Is To Change Your prospect's Default “NO” into a Tentative, Then Emphatic YES.

To explain how it works I need to fill you in on some advertising lore - because when you see how truly vital this connection is to your success as a marketer you'll understand why this is the most important sales letter for a copywriter/consultant you will ever read.

...In 1957 journalist Vance Packard published... an expose of the advertising industry - called "the Hidden Persuaders" and even though Packard was a fine writer in his time... the book would still be obscure if it weren't prominently mentioned in Robert Cialdini's popular book "Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion" - and in Packard's book is a Chapter titled "How Ad Men Became Depth Men" - the crux what the book describes is how "Motivation Research" or M.R. revealed, starting around the 1930s when it was first developed in University research settings, that what people SAY they want and what they really want... and will pony-up money for... are different.

Basically - Unless You Offer Your Prospect Satisfaction For His Secret Desires As Well As A Tangible Advantage To Buying From You, Your Advertising Is Guaranteed To Underperform!

This is so easy to misunderstand... or only grasp in a shallow way. The knowledge is more dangerous in the wrong hands than no knowledge at all. Selling to the secret desires works in print and on the internet, like gangbusters - but for writer's who come to this with an incorrect understanding it's tragically ineffective.

The most simple-minded metaphor is this: ***"People don't buy a drill because they want a drill, they buy it because they want a hole!"***

Business platitudes like this explain something very deep and complex in simplistic terms... and copywriter's who aren't committed depth men write the kind of copy that passes for average (the type you may have running to sell your products right now) - and business owners wonder why their offers aren't converting to sales more often.

"Times are tough," you might say - and engage in trying to fix the problem from the wrong end...

When the Truth is...

...It's Because Most Of The Time The Sales Message Let You Down!

Lots of factors are at play with copy, what makes it work and what makes it not work. It's a full-time job to stay sharp, and if you aren't involved in studying and working on copy problems on a daily basis like I am you might misjudge what the problems really are, and make costly mistakes.

Sometimes it's not the writing or the selling system at all - it can just be a matter of miscalculated demand; Maybe, for instance, the market research was off-base or the appeal was just wrong or it was the wrong product at the wrong time. These things happen even to marketers who are pretty sharp and savvy - so don't make the mistake of blowing up your ego like it won't possibly happen to YOU.

Here's the good news: If you've got a halfway decent and timely product you want to bring to market and the advertising fails to convert profitably, chances are it's a fixable marketing issue.

The errors may rest on the shoulders of the guy who wrote the copy full of over-hyped and off-key language... the kind that looks like a letter that might sell, but really just alienates today's skeptical prospects who turn-away, thinking...

"yeah, right."

I'm a musician and I think of copy like music or poetry. I'm not saying it should be beautiful, just that there is a "rightness" of the sound and rhythm a good copywriter can capture so the reader doesn't actually notice the copy much but experiences the advertising as congruent and believable.

"I've Been on The Front Lines, and Paid the Consequences Of Underestimating Today's Consumer"

Like an arrogant big-game hunter accustomed to shooting big, dumb herbivores who approaches hunting lions the same way I once underestimated the skepticism and resistance of consumers. I lived to tell the tale unlike our hunter who became Lion-lunch!

I came away humbled and determined to be the best student I could of consumer psychology - and never turn a blind eye to the hard, competitive realities of the marketplace - where **misjudging the timing, your prospect or the precise tone of your sales message could mean the difference between a breakthrough for your business and a tragic failure.**

I have a story to tell, because I didn't come to copywriting by taking some home-study course to make a new career as a freelance writer. No. I was dragged into copywriting because I had a real business I needed to get results from. Just like you.

Here's how I got started with online marketing: I dabbled for years selling stuff on Ebay - and got proficient at writing copy for my auctions - but I had to deal with stocking and shipping stuff... well, there were issues with Ebay that made me not really want to get into it full-time.

I was a cabinetmaker at the time; Ebay was just a sideline I did mostly to support my collecting of old tools by selling same. Woodworking (romantic notions of the aroma of fresh-cut cedar aside) is hard, backbreaking work. I wanted to get out.

I was tired of being tied down to a brick-and-mortar business and honestly, it

was getting to the point with Ebay where sellers were making their money on shipping commodity items - which meant they had to warehouse and ship the stuff in-house to make money because price-competition for sales had intensified and Ebay was changing it's long-standing auction format (which I liked) to one emphasizing the BuyItNow approach.

I jumped into online marketing and lost money paying for traffic to websites... until I figured out how to put up my own web pages and started writing my own copy... and then I started making money.

The first day my copywriting skills stuffed nearly \$12,000 in personal profit into my bank account I thought I had the whole world figured out...

and then my world Changed...

... see - I didn't know it at the time but I caught a wave, an internet trend - and I got in front of it and **I pocketed over \$27,000 in under 30 days....** and then the wave was over.

But my eyes were opened to the possibilities...

\$27k may seem like a lot to you or not so much - it depends on your own life experience. **For me that represented about 6 average months of solid work as a cabinetmaker.** To have that land in my lap all at once put me in "hog heaven".

The experience proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that given the right marketplace conditions I could create copy that sold like crazy... and the funny part is that by my standards today that copy really stank!

"Then I realized what had really happened - and it drove me nuts!"

Even though I cashed-in nicely on a marketing wave it soon passed.

I could see the potential of jumping from wave to wave - but I had an issue... an ethical one.

I knew I could make money, but since I knew the truth about the industry I knew I couldn't, honestly, sell these sorts of offers anymore.

Here's why: On The Internet, A Reputation Is Going To Follow You...

If you get known for leading people into faulty investments (which is how "make money" programs are perceived by participants - even though they are in fact opportunities with no guarantees of return without work) then that reputation gets around.

In fact, I had a guy make a dig at me once (designed to make me look bad and himself look good... funny how people do that) and cleverly use my name TWICE in the blog... and as of this writing that post by the guy, basically implying nasty things about my character, appears on page 1 of the Google search results for my name. The search engines like Google can really work against you... and ***it's really very easy for another person to slander you online if they know how... and this guy did.***

I don't fear making controversial statements, and I also realize that anytime you become prominent you'll become a target for criticism. I realized then that if I behaved in a certain way I could grab a lot of money, but I would also acquire a reputation which would not be aligned either with my long-term goals or my character.

So I Turned My Back On A Super-Lucrative Money-Maker And Passed-Up Hundreds of Thousands of Dollars in Income Potential... Just Because of This Thing I Call "My Conscience"

Some people don't care about whether they are bringing value to the marketplace or helping people - all they want is to make a buck! They don't care if they have to tell lies to get ahead... if people want get-rich-quick fantasies, these folks will stuff the lies like a farmer stuffing grain down a goose's throat to fatten him up and rip-out his liver to make foie-gras pate.

Gross.

After the heady days of my early windfall profits and the gradual letdown of watching that income turn-out to be pretty much a one-hit-wonder - I realized that to build a sustainable business as an online marketer I needed to **specialize** in one specific skill and bring more real value to the marketplace. So I applied myself to the mastery of copywriting for the internet.

There is no skill like copywriting - and even if you hire copywriters like me to do your writing for you there is tremendous advantage for you in being an informed consumer - if you know what copywriting is about, what effective copy needs to achieve, and how detailed the process of producing awesome copy is, then you'll get better results from your marketing because you will be capable of better communication with your writer.

Credibility Blasters!

In the old direct-mail days you had to always contend with the very real costs of postage and list-rentals. While a lot of bad copy and dumb offers did get mailed in the old days, such letters didn't stick around because the promoters either improved their skills or got out of the game.

These days with online copy there are a lot of salesletters you'll run across that are really, really bad. I see a lot of copywriters churning out letters with response-killing errors in them. Sometimes you'll even see copywriters parroting TV commercials with attempts at sales-closing taglines like:

"But Wait, there's more... "
"Now how much would you pay?"
"You get all this for only \$47!"

This is more common than you might think - and people use it because they've heard it on TV where it works because of the linear nature of the TV format - which functions more or less like a live sales presentation. With written copy your prospect scans the letter searching for reasons to buy... and reasons not to buy, checking the price, the offer, the bonuses... and making rapid, mostly subconscious assessments about the credibility of the vendor and the offer.

You need to realize that until you've established a trusting relationship with a customer he or she will have a good deal of apprehension about whether you deliver a good value for what you ask in return.

Your prospect has sales resistance if only because your product costs him money - and today he has RELATIONSHIP RESISTANCE to you based on the tone, language - everything about how your offer is presented - so first your copy needs to win your prospect's trust so he'll listen to you - and then it needs to follow-through and move that person through the buying process - anticipating reactions and objections as they come up in his mind.

Pre-Emptive selling... in print!

Basically this is a method of steering the prospect's mind in a direction which will naturally result in an objection... and raising it preemptively in a subtle way so the prospect accepts continues to read and accept your sales arguments as plausible and interesting.

Meeting objections head-on isn't always the best approach. The reason is because the reason people say they buy something and the reason they actually buy it are different. If you were to sell directly (in most cases) to the real reasons people buy things, they would tune you out because they don't want to be sold that way. People buy for very selfish reasons, like validation of their own self-worth, but they justify with

logic after the fact. Copywriting, because it's such a low-pressure form of selling, needs to coax the reader simultaneously to experience the product in his mind's eye on a visceral or emotional level. Simultaneously the copy usually needs to provide some compelling rational reasons to choose your product over others.

The old slam-it-out-of-the-park salesletter has its place in print direct-response, because in print you only have one chance to make the sale. It still has a place online - but if you pour all your efforts and budget into the letter you are leaving an enormous amount of money on the table - because now we have email, and consumers are used to it, expect it, and furthermore they've become downright COY about the sales process.

A Short Way to say it is Eager Buyers are in Shorter Supply These Days - Your Sales Message Must Get Inside The Heads of Today's Consumers, Or Face The Dire Consequences!

People don't buy nearly as eagerly as they used to - because while you are running your "ass-kicking" salesletter they are researching your reputation, your business, your products, looking for better offers and checking-out your competition. They have a lot of options and they know it!

The game has changed with direct-response advertising - just as the salesman calling to inform his prospect about the virtues of his product was made obsolete by the online information explosion, so has the role of the salesletter as the sole point-of-reference for your prospect's buying decision was obliterated.

The old game with direct response way to actually work up a fury of desire in your reader so he writes a check or calls or responds in some way - and if you have the kind of product that approach still works with, go for it! Today with internet-savvy buyers the customer is in the driver's seat and knows an awful lot more about the general nature of your product and related competition... he is a different, more highly evolved animal and if your marketing doesn't march in step with him you will leave a tremendous amount of unclaimed money on the table while your prospect buys from your competition!

This is WHY you must try not only to capture every prospect's email with a free "goodie" of high perceived-value, **the burden of proving your credibility as a seller shifts from your product salesletter to your follow-up - which is WHY you need email copy that is as effective, entertaining, and engaging to your prospect as possible...** and writing email copy is different from salesletter copy - and meshing those two components together for consistency and maximum persuasiveness not only will increase your results - it will MULTIPLY THEM!



Prospects Aren't That Dumb: Ploys, Tricks and Gambits Do Not Winning Copy Make!

Sales ploys, closes and gambits are mechanisms - I know them and use them - but you would be making a big mistake if you thought you could sell anything to anybody with just a bagfull of sales trickery.

"Tricks" are used by copywriters (and other salespeople) to involve prospects and agree to "give it a try" - but without a credible argument for real value in today's marketplace the skeptical (and qualified-to-buy) prospect will often see through sales tricks, yet search for real evidence and proof of value and choose to buy. Your copy need to offer substance as well as excitement.

Common mechanisms include:

-> The "common enemy" ("the bad guys on wall street plundered the pensions of good folks like you - They're the real villains in this crisis...")

-> The scarcity gambit (often really limited to ***as many as we can sell!***)

-> The limited-time offer (often really limited to ***as long as we can milk it!***)

-> Reason-why copy (ie. ***"we only were able to get enough fabric to make 1000 of these coats at this price. Because we got the material at such a bargain we can afford to pass our savings onto you this one time only."***)

-> The One-time-offer

-> The Innoculation ploy

-> and many more...

These are all useful means of winning a sale with direct-response offers. **They do work when used appropriately.** If you are just looking for a "quick hit" and not to build a loyal list of customers they can be used unethically too, but with unwanted consequences if you get caught.

SILVER BULLET COPYWRITING SKILLS



These mastery skills are like guiding forces of nature for the kind of copy that creates a highly memorable offer that gets results - both immediately and in the long-term as your product and offer age (the period when many products fade into marketplace obscurity).

These are effective tactics for all sorts of copy, but they not the heart and soul of copy that wins true friends for your business and pre-eminence in the marketplace. In isolated letters they are essential and proven sales tools, and I use them. In the wrong hands they produce poor results however - because these powerful persuaders must be used with sensitivity and elegance. If they are not your whole cover of credibility gets blown and your sales can plummet disastrously!

There is a deeper directive guiding my entire approach - five “Silver Bullets” go to work in my unique copy not only to sell products but also to build an image of trustworthiness and superiority for your business.

While most professionally written sales copy gets one or two of these right it is rare to see all five working full-bore in a piece of copy... because it's hard to do and it requires intense study of the craft to understand how they all function and still more intense powers of concentration, not to mention intuition and “natural” salesmanship to pull them all together gracefully in one sales letter or selling system.

As abstractions, as I explain these things here you may find yourself thinking "oh that's obvious"... but it's the blending of all these elements and more together in subtle ways that make for winning copy. For the same reason it can be very tricky to try to sell a product using the same copy that worked for something similar only recently, because the mood of the marketplace is in constant fluctuation.

The “Buy Command” Mechanism In Our Brains



There is a system for installing an embedded instant-recall mechanism within your ideal customer's brain which forces him to identify your product alone as the one which will solve his problem at the time when the problem becomes too intense for him to tolerate.

Few people know of it's existence. Fewer still understand how to

implement such a system into a practical marketing system - and it is my obsession to be one of those few.

Some buyers are NOW buyers. They will buy within 48 hours. These buyers are costly to acquire but they are the bread and butter of many businesses. When you stop advertising however, they disappear, which means to maintain a steady flow of them your costs will escalate in general.

The ideal is to create buying-response systems of an almost (or perhaps literally) Pavlovian nature in the minds of your prospects... enslaving the future buyer into a ready customer, even years in the future of the exposure to your marketing - even despite exposure to the more recent marketing of your competitors.

Doing this form of marketing with more focus and dedication than your competitors will most likely result in a clear preference for your products over theirs. You may scoff at this as if such factors were not a reality in your business, but look even at your own behavior and realize that you yourself are enslaved to brand preference at a "hardwired" emotional level - and even while you have no clear rational reason for preferring the brands and products you prefer, you do prefer them, perhaps pay more for them, and in fact get more satisfaction from owning and using them than you would from your non-preferred products.



Pacing and Leading

I learned about pacing in leading while studying person-to-person selling and Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP). In copywriting these things are not the same as with one-to-one relationship selling, but there are enough conceptual similarities that the same terms seem right to me.

The written copy itself should have neither too much momentum to it nor too little. In many cases it is the right thing to crank-up the intensity of the copy at certain points, and then back it off to allow the reader to relax. Copy that is super-intense from start to finish may work in some markets, "tough guy" products for example, but for others it may just scare off or intimidate your best prospects.

Writing for older customers? hard-hitting and fast-moving copy may make them too nervous to buy, because they tend to value a feeling of

safety over excitement.

Writing to sell performance enhancing engine parts to testosterone-fueled young men? A fast pace and hard-hitting copy matches their yearning for action and excitement.



The Language of Persuasion

Just as tempo and rhythm affect the reader's experience of the copy, and your whole sales process, the language needs to be both familiar and engaging enough that people respond to it emotionally.

For some mass-market products and offers extremely dumbed-down language is appropriate. As you move into more costly products which target specific problems or smarter people the language should be adapted to match where they are.

This is not a matter of writing for the intelligentsia, because in most cases your reader is preoccupied with many things on his mind and your sales message gets only a fraction of his attention. Clarity of language is thus essential to effective copy - because while many people are intelligent enough to puzzle-out what confusing passages mean in a textbook, they won't usually bother with sales copy, they will just give-up and stop reading.

Writing effective prose is a lifetime skill. There is only one way to learn how, which is putting the time in.

Persuasive language is a learned art as well. It is largely rooted in the language we use when making logical connections and ordering our thought processes - because when we do this we feel we are making rational, smart, informed decisions. Because making smart decisions makes us feel good we like to be helped to make them.

Examples are phrases which help us understand the offer with complete clarity. There are dozens of widely-used persuasive language structures, but here are a few:

"If... then"
"because..."
"here's why..."
"let me explain..."

Do you see how these work? These simple words and phrases easily lead the reader into feeling like he or she understands, and in fact they are doorways to comprehension because they engage the part of us that likes to learn new things.



Stages of Awareness

The selling message must intersect precisely with your prospect's level of awareness of how his problem can be solved by your type of product. Miss it by a little and you can still get the sale - but misjudge this very-real marketplace factor and your incredible offer could draw a complete blank from your readers.

Some products are truly ahead of their time - but your marketing must always be in tune with the times. How you approach introducing a truly new product or innovation is very different from the way you go about differentiating your product from others in a crowded marketplace. It can all be done, but each situation calls for a different form of copy and in addition to the two stages of awareness I've already described there are 3 more and endless subtleties to the process.



The Structure of Persuasion

Persuasion in print is largely structural. When I explain it here it's going to seem abstract, but when you study good salesletters in the future look at the structure.

There are obvious things of course: headline, subhead, testimonials, and so on... and those are elements and by default some of them occupy specific places in the letter... but these are not what I mean when I say that persuasion is a structural challenge.

When you understand the role structure plays in written persuasion you can then start to deploy persuasive elements intentionally for precise effect at specific points in your copy.

In short, when you understand how structure in copywriting works you start to grasp not only what to write, but where to write it in your letter.

Learning any skill is awkward at first, then it becomes comfortable, and when you become highly skilled it starts to feel natural and even works at an unconscious level.

Salesletters are structured, generally, with a bold headline making a claim or otherwise attempting to capture attention from the target audience: the people most likely to have the problem the product solves, the desire to do something about it, and the means to buy.

When I was building high-end custom furniture I would send out postcards to designers in my area. The simple headlines I used were like this:

“Designers: Are You Frustrated With Your Current Cabinetmaker?”

The postcard says who it's for, designers. Then it asks if they have a problem - and from experience I knew that problems usually had to do with poor quality work or late delivery. The body copy of the postcard mentioned those issues and encouraged designers to call for a free report.

I wearied of working wood for a living, but the direct-response marketing I do today is similar in many ways, even though my products are different. I try to get the salesletter in front of the right people who MIGHT have the problem, ask if they do (sometimes not directly) and offer my solution. It's all common sense when you study direct-response a bit - but the writing itself has a huge affect on response and there is arguably both an art and a science to the writing.

Structural persuasion usually takes the form, after the initial problem is stated or implied, of making a claim, getting your reader to agree the claim may be valid, then moving on to another claim which - if you can pull it off, is a little more outrageous than the first claim.

The reader, because he has already agreed with the first claim, is psychologically invested in your sales message already. This is a little hard to believe but it does really work this way. The structural copywriter then proceeds to build a series of agreements that “X is a problem” and “here's the solution and it makes sense, right?” (Of course this is not the way real copy reads, I'm just explaining it in unsubtle terms to make the structure clear).

The reader agrees in his head that the problem is real and the solution seems plausible. There is generally only a glimmer of desire to buy at this point however. As we progress through the copy we restate the problem from different perspectives and try to intensify the reader's internal experience of the problem. If the reader does not get stirred emotionally with a mental image of himself suffering from the problem the sale is not made... but when you hook him in and get him to OWN the problem by visualizing himself having it you have him partially sold.

Even when you have the reader (who could be a woman but I'll use the masculine pronoun here throughout) experiencing and visualizing the

problem as a “mind movie” you still need to build a hot desire for your solution and to that ideally you have to get the guy to embrace some wild claims that he wouldn’t have at the start of the letter, because they seem too far out.

Folks are skeptical these days, and if you make the big claims that will get the sale while they are only involved on a mental (and skeptical) level you will find it hard to close the sale unless the price is super-cheap, which is usually not a good thing for your bottom-line.

If you want to make some real money at this game you need to get an emotional involvement from your prospect so he feels the pain of his problem intensely and is motivated to solve it immediately. When he accepts the plausibility of all your claims (and he wouldn’t if he were not emotionally involved) then the sale almost “closes itself”.

There is an art to closing the sale as well, but emotional involvement is absolutely necessary if you are to get some big dollars with your marketing. In the close you may have to justify a price which is higher than the guy would prefer to pay, but he’ll pay more than you might think if he is solidly persuaded with the structural method I’ve outlined here.



The True Secret of Effective Copy

Well friend, you've come this far and I sure hope you've learned something about salesmanship in print, or on the web.

The end message, the 7th revelation is the best, and most powerful of them all. Without it most copy will fail. In fact it is so powerful it is well-known by many people, yet many business owners fail abjectly to bring it into play in their marketing copy. I've alluded to this factor many times in this report, but under emphasized it for a specific purpose - which is because I am in the business of writing copy and developing marketing systems for clients I want you, as a prospective client, to see and understand the depth of the approach I bring. It is not easy to do this work, but it is rewarding and challenging. The more you, as a client, understand what is going on the more fruitful our dialog will be, and hopefully your products will be made better as well by this knowledge.

I hope you are connected to the internet as you read this, because the 7th revelation of winning copy is on a secret web-page.

Here's the link: <http://copymatch.com/the7th.html>