

## WRITE A GREAT MARKETING LETTER

Here are 13 great ideas to help you put together a fantastic marketing letter that will maximise the return on investment for your campaign:

### 1) **Get a good list**

Your campaign will only be as good as the mailing list used. And there's absolutely no point in trying to send a wonderfully crafted sales letter to the wrong prospects.

So what makes for the best list? Your own list. Most businesses overlook this biggest source of never-ending profits. Start by collecting emails and other details of visitors to your website, telephone enquirers, and so on.

If you have not bought a list before, get some advice from someone experienced in direct mailings. This will save a lot of wasted time and money

### 2) **Who are you?**

Focus on the results not the action. Don't just execute the mailing for the sake of doing it, ensure the list is good quality and get even better results. So often, businesses send out a generic letter that gets a 1% response. A little personalisation could double that.

What sort of people are you contacting, what are their fears, wants, hopes and desires? What is the common denominator of the people on the list? How can you start to appeal to their emotions if they have such wide and varying characteristics? Analyse your best prospects. And find some more just like them.

Before you are able to adequately address the specific concerns of your market, you should pinpoint exactly whom you are hoping to reach. Your list is your market, so get to know it inside out.

### 3) **Include a powerful headline**

Around 99% of all businesses sending out sales letters omit one crucial element: the headline. Why is it so important? Because it will be the first thing your reader will look at. If there's nothing immediate there to stir his or her interest, your letter will more than likely be ignored.

A good headline demands attention and compels the reader to read the rest of your letter.

### 4) **WIIFM**

Believe it or not your prospect doesn't want to know about you and how great you reckon your company/product/service is. They want to know what's in it for them - why should they keep reading?

How do you know if there isn't enough focus on the prospect? Grab one of your latest sales letters. How many times do you use the words Our, We, Us or your business/brand name? Now count the number of times you use the words You, Yours, Your.

Which scores higher? If it's the former, you've committed one of the deadliest yet so simple sins in the direct response world. Change it so that You, Yours and Your make more of an appearance, and you should see a difference in response rates.

#### **5) Accuracy is credibility**

Ensure that you spell check and grammar check your letter. And then get two fastidious friends and offer them a drink for each mistake they find.

Your goal is to end up with a polished and professional letter. One that does not alienate the anal or peeve the pernickety.

I know people that throw sales letters straight onto the recycle pile as soon as they see a misspelling or major grammatical error. Don't fall at the first hurdle and make sure that the final product is as close to perfect as possible.

#### **6) Show clear benefits**

One of the oldest and most widely acknowledged 'rule' for writing letters that sell is, "Stress the benefits, not the features." Aside from technical products, where features are used to differentiate between products, benefits are what make things irresistible.

Far too many businesses stress the features of their product and don't even mention the benefits. Big mistake. Readers want to know how they will personally benefit from buying your product. What are they getting for the price you're charging? Be sure to focus on your customer and present her with benefits that fit in with her wants and needs.

#### **7) Make them an offer**

One of the most common marketing letter mistakes is that there is no incentive for the reader to respond. To be successful, your letter should include a compelling offer that would make it almost impossible for readers NOT to respond.

Try 20% off if they respond by a certain date, two-for-one, 2 hours' consultation free, whatever you fancy. But offer the prospect something in return for reading the letter.

#### **8) Size is important**

Don't be scared of running over to a second page. In fact, if you are confident in your marketing writing style, upto 3 pages is acceptable. This needs fantastic formatting and compelling copy but then you will have a letter that exceeds most people's expectations.

Remember, the letter is not there to sell your products. It is there to pique the reader's interest and to get them to execute your "call to action". So you don't need to tell them everything. Tell them just enough that they know they need to ask for more information.

#### **9) Call to action**

All too often, a marketing letter arrives with a great idea, excellent offer or raises the prospects' curiosity and then the letter leaves them dangling. There needs to be a clear "call to action".

Always end with something like "call us now on 020 8123 4568 to find out more". It sound patronising but you reader really DOES need to be told what to do.

### **10) Give proofs**

Even if you have done a great job in your letter and managed to show how and why your product is the best in the marketplace, today's highly cynical clients demand that you absolutely have to provide proof and come across as credible.

Whether it is testimonials from clients, awards or industry standards, make sure you mention them in the letter.

### **11) Risk reversal**

Despite a great product, the likelihood is that the reader will hesitate to do business with you. The risk might be too great. People need to be reassured that there will be no strings attached to purchasing your product, so give them reason to buy with confidence.

Offer a guarantee or some other form of risk-reversal. Research shows that few people actually take up guarantees if the product or service is good enough. So it won't cost you as much as you think to offer money back or a detailed service level agreement.

### **12) Use plain English**

A sure way to reduce the response from your letter is to use weak, unimaginative and unconvincing language. A lot of letters posted through today's letterboxes are full of vague terms. They lack specifics, authority, creativity and, worse of all, there's no 'persuasive' copy. Using the right words and solid facts can dramatically increase your letter's success rate.

Most business owners do not have the skills or experience to create compelling copy. Seriously consider employing a professional copy writer. Not doing so may save some money but your response rate will be much lower, unless you are a good marketing writer.

### **13) Include at least one PS**

Research has shown that readers often skip to the PS half-way through the letter or give it more emphasis than the body copy. So add in at least one PS with an exciting bit of information.

**To discuss a telemarketing campaign or the skills for generating new sales contact A&P on 0870 710 2233 or go to <http://www.a-and-p.com/>**