

15 Tips for Writing Powerful Sales Letters (aka Salesmanship in Print)

By Joe Heller, High Performance Sales Coach

I've written this "how-to" article to give you a competitive edge when writing a sales letter. The following 15 Tips (and tricks) will give you everything you need to know to write killer sales letters. Enjoy and prosper -

The secret to writing a sales letter is that there is no secret. A killer sales letter is written to accomplish one of three things.

1. Generate interest to qualify (or disqualify) a lead

2. Advance a prospect through the sales process

3. Secure TOMA [Top of Mind Awareness] for additional sales with your existing client base

Question -- What makes writing an effective sales letter so challenging? Here are the top 15.5 reasons why people fail to write effective sales copy and what you can do about them.

- 1) No clear objective in mind before you sit down to write your sales letter -- In order to write persuasively you must have an end in mind, a goal for your reader. Ask yourself, what do you want the reader do when they finish reading your letter.
- 2) Lack of an attention getting headline or opening sentence -- You must hook the reader immediately with a captivating opener in order to get the reader to invest their valuable time to finish reading the letter. 80%+ of sales letters fail to generate attention.
- 3) Lead sentence fails to extend the theme of the headline into the letter -- You must bridge the reader into the sales copy once their attention is captured or risk confusing the reader and losing their interest.
- 4) Fail to write in a conversational tone -- Write like you talk. A letter should be a dialog between you and the reader. The reader should get a sense that you are genuinely concerned with their well being.
- 5) Copy is boring, fails to keep the reader interested -- You must develop a writing style based on your personality, not on antiquated High School grammar practices that are assured to put any reader to sleep. It's ok for your writing to fail grammatically as long as your don't lose the focus on your message.
- 6) Fail to use a proven writing format -- In order to be effective you must use an established formula for writing copy such as "story telling" or "problem -> agitate -> solution". Sales letters are written to produce a measurable result, NOT a creative award.
- 6.5) No bolding or underlining within the letter -- There are a number of things you can do to add emphasis to key parts of your sales letter to direct your readers attention where you want it to go. Emphasis also helps pull the reader into the letter.
- 7) Me focused, not reader focused -- Stop focusing on how great your product is... the reader doesn't really care. Will your product save money? Time? or generate revenue? Profits? Never forget your reader is tuned into WIIFM (What's In It For Me) when they read your letter. Always emphasize the major benefits your reader will receive from your product.

8) Nix the jargon -- avoid industry jargon or buzzwords and stick to talking about your benefits in plain English. Nothing will turn a reader off more quickly than using industry jargon you think they should know and often don't.

9) Use testimonials -- No matter on what stage you are in with your prospect you should always include testimonials. Testimonials increase your credibility and your believability.

10) Feature focused, not benefit focused -- You must keep the copy focused on the benefits your reader will receive by owning your product. Example: Your product is made from plastic (feature); you tell the reader that because your product is made from plastic (feature) it will never rust (advantage). Thereby, lowering replacement costs (benefit), eliminate corrosion (benefit), etc...

11) No bullet points or single sentence paragraphs -- There are two types of readers. There are those who will read the entire letter once you've captured their attention and then there are those who will skim your letter. You must be able to reach both reading styles. Bullets and single sentence paragraphs allow your reader to capture important benefits at a glance.

12) Long sentences -- In order to keep the prospects attention in today's busy world you must write in short sentences. Never use a comma. This includes using incomplete sentences [when necessary] in your letter copy in order to express your point.

13) Lengthy paragraphs -- Try to keep your paragraphs to 3 sentences (5 at the maximum). Even though you've captured their attention with your opening headline you must write for interruptions that will occur as they read your letter during a hectic business day. Complete your thoughts quickly.

14) Copy does not define next steps -- Now that you've got your prospect to read all the way to the end of your letter... now what? What actions on your part or theirs must take place? The "next step" is where you psychologically engage the reader into your sales process and tell them exactly what to do or expect.

15) Fail to use a "ps" to close your letter -- The "ps" is the second most read section of a letter. The "ps" is a great place to reiterate your #1 benefit from your headline or opening sentence.

15.5) Proof-read your letter -- always proof your letter two or three times. If you have someone else proof your letter, explain your goals to them. When they give you their critique, acknowledge their comments; however, any changes made to the letter are your decision alone. If you decide to proof your own letter let it sit for a few hours or a day, print it and then read it aloud to make sure it's conversational. Do NOT proof your letter on your word processor (unless you're an experienced editor); make your notes on the paper for easy review.

One final note; in order to become a successful in selling you must become an avid student of what works in selling. I developed the Revenue Warrior Selling System (TM) to give you a competitive advantage and succeed against your most challenging competition. You can find the Revenue Warrior Selling System (TM) on my site <http://www.JoeHeller.com>. Go there right now and click on the Revenue Warrior Selling System (TM) to learn more. It's a great resource from my personal library for yours.

Dedicated To Multiplying Your Sales;

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