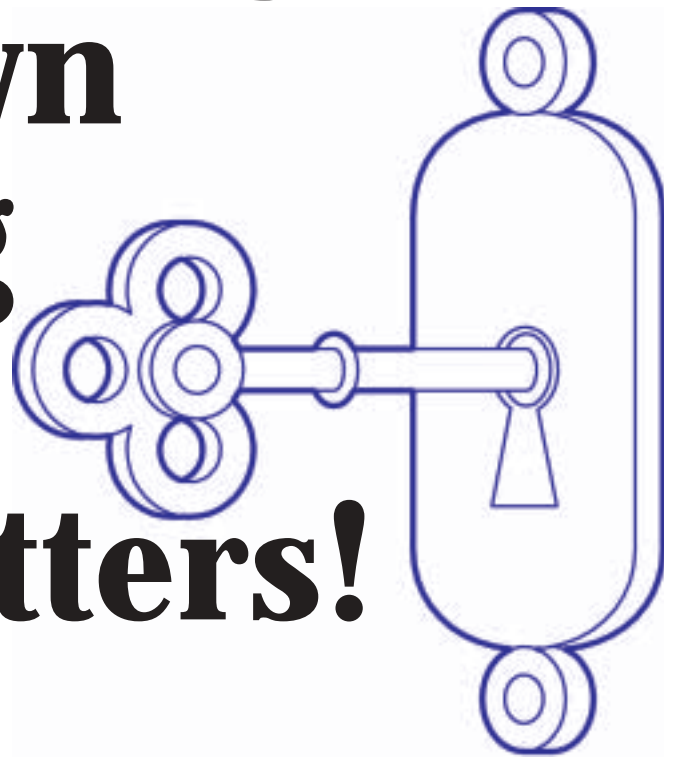


107 KEY TIPS For Creating Your Own Winning Website Sales Letters!



Robert Boduch

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Online Marketing

1. Pull — don't push. Pull prospects inside with an alluring appeal, instead of pushing your product upon them. Online prospects are in complete charge of their experience. You cannot contain your visitors with multiple pop-up windows in an attempt to keep them at your site. That will only frustrate and annoy the very people you want on your side. The only way to keep prospects there reading your sales copy is to give them more of what it is they want. In the online world, it's the recipient (the prospect) not the sender (the vendor) that controls the sales presentation.

2. Respond immediately to all inquiries from your website the same way you'd respond to incoming calls on the phone. Make it an absolute rule to respond within 24 hours — sooner if you can. Your customers expect you to take their inquiry seriously and to answer promptly and professionally. The sooner you reply, the more you'll impress your prospect. This doesn't mean that you need your email program open 24 hours a day. It means periodically and regularly blocking out chunks of time to reply to every message from a potential customer. Responding in a timely manner sets you apart from many other business owners who don't understand the importance of good service before the sale.

3. Make good use of your available space online. In traditional media such as space ads, you're limited as to how much content you can fit into an advertisement. To maximize response from limited (and costly) space, you need to appeal to the emotions of your target market to evoke an immediate emotional response. Online, it's dirt cheap to occupy as much space as you want. But you must deliver compelling copy to keep prospects interested and involved. With a website there's enough space to do a thorough selling job. It's an opportunity to unleash every potential selling advantage and appeal to both the buyer's emotions and intellect. It's a 1-2 punch that melts away any buyer resistance.

4. Your competition is everywhere – not just from those offering similar products. There's an ever-growing barrage of competing messages, online and offline – all vying for your prospect's time and attention. Your challenge is to cut through the clutter with an offer that's pertinent, in demand and irresistibly appealing. Online prospects are only partially tuned-in most of the time. To succeed, you need to interrupt the 'noise' of competing distractions with a message that grabs their undivided focus with its relevance, importance and timeliness. Keep nudging your prospect until action is taken.

5. Think long term. The purpose of your sales copy is not merely to make a sale now — although that is certainly a fundamental objective – but to gain a customer. It's not the immediate revenue that counts the most; it's the lifetime value you gain from each customer. Repeat sales and referrals from satisfied customers are where the true profits lie.

6. Start from a foundation of accumulated knowledge. Begin with an understanding of what has already worked well for others, and build on that. Use the tools, techniques and strategies that have already proven themselves. If a successful marketer is using a specific method, there's a good reason why. Careful observation and the adaptation of specific ideas and approaches can catapult you towards success. But always test each element. Never assume it will work without first testing. Learn from established 'controls' in specific markets. Study the most successful sales letters. Adapt some of the techniques, tactics and strategies they use – then, test them out. Using this approach reduces the risk – particularly in the beginning. You can always experiment afterwards.

7. Make it your mission to attract customers and continue to serve them for years. Regardless of the type of product you sell, you're in the business of acquiring first time customers and turning them into lifelong fans and advocates of your products and services. To do so, serve prospects and customers with a level of care, attention, and professionalism — beyond what they could logically expect from any business.

8. Use mishaps to your advantage. Turn lemons into lemonade. Mistakes happen, regardless of your business. Products arrive late, damaged, or the wrong size or color. Some never reach their destination, particularly those being shipped long distances to other countries. Selling online opens the world to your product, so you can expect to ship products to many different countries. The best way to counteract problem shipments is to act quickly and decisively, always in the customers favor. Get the right product out immediately – even if it means shipping the identical product again. It's also a good idea to throw in an added bonus, as a little gesture to acknowledge the problem and your intention to resolve it immediately.

9. Examine your website as the customer would see it. Is your sales copy clear and easy to understand? Does it lead prospects to your easy-to-complete order form? Maintain a strong customer focus in all you do. Since your objective is to acquire customers and continually delight them, every decision regarding copy, layout and design should be

made with the customer's perspective clearly in view. Focus your efforts on providing important, meaningful advantages they can't get anywhere else. Stress your unique benefits and added value.

10. Strive for consistency. Maintain a single direction, theme and layout throughout your sales letter and web site. Consistently answer inquiries promptly. Give every customer the kind of attention and service you like to receive. Make consistent quality in all aspects of your operations part of your business culture.

11. Treat your prospect as the intelligent individual he or she is. Look at every sentence of your sales copy as they would and maintain a prospect-centered approach with every page, paragraph and sentence. Ask yourself if what you're saying makes sense to your potential customer. Avoid trickery at all costs. Don't exaggerate limited time offers or extend sale prices beyond what you've stated. You won't fool many and such an approach can irreparably damage the perception and position you hold in the marketplace.

12. Take as much space as you need to adequately convey your customer benefit story. Don't limit your message to a page or two when a multiple page presentation packs more benefit power and is much more compelling. Many people say they prefer short copy to long copy. But test after test indicates that long, benefit-rich copy presented in a way that grabs the reader's imagination out-pulls short copy. Long copy often outperforms short copy in both online and offline sales letters. The key is to make it interesting and easy to read. *Make your long copy seem like short copy.* Space your sentences and paragraphs. Break your letter up into easily digestible bite-size bits of valuable and interesting information. The longer you can hold the reader's interest and the more benefits you can stack up, the greater your odds of getting the sale.

13. Take advantage of the nature of the Internet as an ever-evolving and growing storehouse of information and resources. Use additional pages at your site to provide helpful and interesting information freely. Update these pages often and you can use them to generate a steady stream of traffic and to position yourself as an authority on your industry. End each article, report or tip with an enticing message and link to your sales letter. Whet your prospect's appetite with your free information. Then, give them the means to get what they really want by offering your product. This is how you can transform 'free' information into consistent cash profits.

Sales Letter Plan

14. Listen to your site's visitors, members, prospects, and customers. Find out what they like and dislike about your site, business, operations, order process, or product. In other words, find out what got them to visit your site in the first place. What was the underlying appeal? This is critical information in determining your future direction. Build on your success. Make it your objective to grow by continuing to provide the marketplace with

more of what customers want. Be careful not to stray too far from your original goal, particularly after you've achieved some success.

15. Target a specific market. Narrow your range and customize your product to ideally fit your clearly identified niche. Your potential customer pool is much smaller this way, but much more likely to buy. These are the people you want to address to the exclusion of everyone else. Since your message is directed at an identifiable group only, it carries a lot more clout within that group. They'll place a high value on your message because it speaks directly to them. Your audience will be much more attentive and receptive than the general public.

16. Understand your product thoroughly. Know what makes your product unique and valuable. Leverage your strengths and address your weaknesses.

17. Give prospects exactly what they want. Don't give them what they need. Don't give them what you think they need. Give prospects only what they want. When you think in terms of customer 'wants', you're coming from an angle of existing desires – a much more direct route to sales than trying to educate prospects before attempting to persuade them. How do you discover the 'wants'? Talk to prospects and customers. Become an active listener and a careful observer. Look wherever crowds gather and discern the 'want' that is being fulfilled. Pay attention to trends and how they might affect your market. Anticipate what customers will want next based on past buying behavior.

18. Market products you can stand behind – something you feel good about. If what you're planning to market is of questionable quality, ethics, or could be harmful or dangerous in some situations, think again. Choose a product that has some redeeming characteristic – something that contributes to the greater good of humankind. Choose something that you would buy. The more enthusiastic you are about your product because of the inherent value and benefit it offers customers – the more influential you'll be in communicating with prospects. When you believe in what you're offering, you're much more effective in writing persuasive copy and generating sales.

19. Prepare before you write. Spot a hungry market then adapt your product to fit. Uncover your prospects problems, worries, concerns and desires. What is it your prospect truly wants to be, have, or do? This is what you need to address – the problems and desires that are on their minds now.

20. Focus your message on what it means to the reader. He doesn't particularly care about you, your business, or your product. What he does care is what your product can do for him as an individual. That's why it's so important to write benefit-laden copy. When you speak about benefits, you're speaking the prospect's language. Benefits are the only reason your prospect is interested and why he buys.

Copywriting Tips

21. Make your message important and relevant to your target audience exclusively. With an ever-expanding array of choices online and less free time available, it's crucial that your message be of personal importance to the reader. Your prospect faces a constant barrage of messages all competing for his time and attention. Most of it is perceived as useless clutter... except for the essential information that speaks directly to the prospect's mind and heart. Those are the only messages that penetrate the invisible barrier shielding prospects from everything else.

22. Consider your sales letter – in fact, every ad or marketing message – your one chance to influence prospects to take action. Make your sales letter a direct response vehicle that asks for action every time. Maintain a singular focus and objective – to stimulate a “yes” response from the prospect. Make every aspect of your sales letter contribute towards the objective of getting the sale. Your letter is your salesperson that reaches out to hundreds, or thousands of potential buyers as a one-on-one personal communication. Make it as compelling as possible. Mediocrity simply won't do.

23. Use specifics rather than generalities. Specific facts and figures add meaning, power and credibility. It makes your claims seem much more real. Vague descriptions on the other hand, don't give the reader anything they can instantly grasp and understand. There's no measuring stick, no quantitative element to give prospects a frame of reference they can easily understand. Providing precise details makes your copy ring true.

24. Spend the majority of your writing time on the most important elements. These include the first things your prospect sees when arriving at your site or sales letter. Critical elements include the background header copy, main headline, sub-heading, Johnson Box, the first line of the letter and the P.S. Your offer and the “big idea” used to present it are also important components of any sales letter. 97% of the prospects you lose will be due to one or more of the above elements.

25. Speak one-on-one with your reader. Establish a connection – a level of rapport that instinctively builds trust. People like to buy from people – people who understand their problem. They like to deal with real people, not faceless corporations. Be just like your prospect. Communicate in a way that resonates and you'll quickly command acceptance. As you write, imagine writing to a friend who fits your target market profile.

26. Make it easier for prospects to respond with a “yes” than a “no”. Facilitate a buying response at every opportunity. Create an offer that's difficult to resist. Provide overwhelming value. Simplify the ordering process by making it as quick and easy as possible. Don't ask your prospects to do too much or you risk losing them. Make buying now well worth the small effort. Make the cost inconsequential.

27. Keep your copy clear and easy to read. Use short words, sentences and paragraphs. Substitute big words with basic words of 5 characters or less. These are words that

everyone understands. Limit sentences to a maximum of 1½ lines in length. Avoid paragraphs of more than 4 - 5 lines. Eliminate anything that could possibly deter further reading. Clarity and simple everyday language is crucial. Write copy that is easy to read and flows continuously, keeping the reader moving along. Make your message impossible to misunderstand. Don't give prospects the opportunity to put a different spin on it.

28. Interact with your reader to keep them actively involved in your message. Avoid long, unemotional drawn out passages that sound like a textbook or boring lecture. Maintain passion and enthusiasm. Toss in the occasional question or brief quiz to further involve your prospects and get them interacting with you — the voice of the letter – on a mental and emotional level.

29. Promise plenty and deliver even more. A common lament in marketing circles is to “under-promise and over-deliver”. Giving the prospect more than they expect is a great way to delight customers and ensure they buy again. But “under-promising” is self-defeating. The basis for all good sales copy is to deliver a big promise — a huge benefit that's sure to capture interest and resonate with your target audience. *Make a huge promise and deliver even more.*

30. Demonstrate a sincere respect for your audience. Speak to them in a friendly tone as you would speak to someone you know. Understand who they are and what makes them tick and respect them for it. Respect their choices. Respect their intelligence and their time. Speak to them in simply language they'll understand and get to the point quickly.

31. Figuratively place your product in your prospect's hands. Demonstrate with image-evoking words exactly how your prospect will benefit by acquiring your product. What will it do for him or her? Allow your prospect to feel and experience these benefits. Make it as real as possible. Provide a glimpse of the ‘magic’ your product offers by allowing prospects to emotionally experience the benefits and advantages of ownership for themselves.

32. Convey an appearance of truth. It's not enough to merely speak the truth... your message also needs to ring true. That's why specific facts and figures are so important. They tie actual, measurable results to your claim. Anecdotes and relevant references help readers to understand and accept what you're saying much more readily. Put you message into a context that makes it more believable.

33. Sell results – not products. Results are the benefits buyer's want. That's what they're interested in attaining, enjoying, or profiting from themselves. They need to be convinced that the product will give them the end result they're after.

34. Deliver as much information as the prospect needs to make an informed purchasing decision. Tell them about your products components and processes – resulting in superior quality, reliability and durability. Describe in detail the painstaking extent to which you

go to create a better product that gives buyers lasting value. Give them facts – all the facts. That’s what serious prospects want to know before they open their wallets.

35. Strive to maintain the attention and interest of your reader. Your main headline must first capture attention and compel the prospect to read further. But you need to constantly deliver interesting news, important information and eye-catching elements to sustain readership through to the order form. The layout, arrangement of your sales presentation, and design elements such as bullets, boxes, and other graphic devices help to rekindle interest throughout your letter.

36. Connect with your reader. Make your letter a personal note from a friend. Advances in technology tend to lead to less human involvement. Online messages often come across as automated responses – computer generated communiqués that lack the ‘up close and personal’ feel. The more effective you are at adding a human touch, the more successful you’ll be in delivering your message. Adding a personal tone to your message can be as simple as using your authentic signature and including a self-portrait. Give your reader the feeling that your letter was written by a caring human being and you’ll stand a greater chance of getting them to pay attention.

37. Feed your prospect bits of information loaded with appeal and self-interest and make it easy to comprehend. Keep it as easy as pie. Avoid using lengthy blocks of copy that can easily intimidate or turn off interested prospects. If it looks like reading your sales letter requires lots of work, your prospect is likely pass it by. Most want magic solutions that require little or no work. That’s human nature. Don’t fight it... address these desires.

38. Structure all the elements of your letter to make reading and taking action exceptionally easy. Align your text to the left – it’s easier to read and makes for a more natural launching point for the reader. Line up as many elements as possible horizontally, to keep your message, clean, simple and easy on the eyes.

39. Add elements that are proven to sustain readership. It’s a constant challenge to keep prospects reading and actively involved, once you get them to your sales letter. Additionally, you want to turn the skimming reader into an involved reader who is fully engaged in your words. To do so, make use of attention-getting elements such as sub-heads, bullet points, callouts, text boxes, pull quotes, bold sections, highlights, italics, charts, and graphs. Notes that appear as handwriting can also draw attention. Also, consider visuals that show people benefiting from your product, a *Frequently Asked Questions* page (FAQ), or the table of contents if you’re marketing a book or manual.

40. Think through the entire shopping experience from your prospect’s point of view. Observe human nature. Study your prospects and how they react. Understand what makes them crave one thing over something else. Figure out in advance what fills them with fear or causes them to doubt what you’re saying. Anticipate the questions, concerns and apprehensions of your audience and address them head on. Selling from a sales letter is different in that you don’t have visual contact and interaction with prospects and

customers. So, you've got to imagine their mindset in advance and minimize or eliminate any possible roadblock in the way of a sale.

41. Speak one-on-one. Get personal in your message. Your words may go out to thousands, but should never come across as being addressed to a crowd. To get personal, you have to know something about your prospect in advance... and the more you know, the better equipped you are to communicate persuasively.

42. Aid readability with short words, short sentences, and short paragraphs. Vary the length of your sentences and paragraphs somewhat... but avoid long tiring passages at all costs. Avoid any temptation to demonstrate vocabulary skills. Your sales letter isn't an English test – it's an opportunity to communicate, influence, and persuade prospects to buy. To keep them reading, write as though you were speaking to a friend. Never use a big word when a smaller, more easily understood term would do. Make it easy to continue on to the next sentence, paragraph, or section – effortlessly.

43. Make your message relevant and important to your prospect. Work quickly to establish rapport. Your words are a representation of you, your product and your company. Your copy is the only connection the prospect has with you. It's as close as he'll get to a real live human being. Therefore, it's imperative that you match your language to the audience. Speak in a conversational tone about what really matters in your prospect's life.

44. Keep your copy flowing freely. Convey your own enthusiasm for the product and express total confidence in it being the ultimate solution to the prospect's problem. Grab attention. Pique curiosity. Hold your reader's interest with strong benefit copy. Use rational proof and answer all objections. That's how you win your prospect's confidence and convince them to take action. Do it all with intensity, rhythm, timing, and drama to get your point across — as you would trying to convince an acquaintance to see things your way.

45. Sign every letter. Don't overlook this obvious point. A distinctive signature speaks volumes to some people. Pay attention to the size, color, vitality, and overall feeling your signature projects. It may be a small component, but an actual signature personalizes your letter and that can have a major effect on its overall power of influence.

46. Provide a single path for your prospect to follow. It's challenging enough just to get them to your sales page, but if you lose them now, your lead generation efforts are wasted. Point your prospect in one direction only. This means avoiding any distracting elements that can cause readers to wander off elsewhere. Eliminate distractions like animated graphics, logos and external links that can quickly whisk prospects away from your site. Give them one way to proceed and make it as natural and logical as possible. Guide them through to your order form.

47. Pay particularly close attention to the most important components of your sales letter. Each key area represents the opportunity to capture or sustain the reader's interest and attention. Key components include: headlines, sub-heads, masthead, letterhead, lead-off banner or graphic, salutation, first line of copy, opening 2-3 paragraphs, offer, guarantee, closing paragraphs, signature and tag-line, P.S., indented, bold, underlined, or italicized copy, bullets, numbered lists, secondary colors, and hand-written notes.

48. Experiment as you go. Analyze your results. Online, testing can be both inexpensive and easy. Vary your prices, offers, appeals, guarantees, deadlines, and headlines.

Why They Buy

49. Get emotional in your sales letter because that's what people respond to. Emotions are powerful triggers of action. When emotion and reason conflict, emotion invariably wins. Most people believe they act logically and rationally. Emotions are the driving force behind the action, while logic is used to justify it. Make an emotional presentation first – then back it up with an appropriate rationale.

50. Know your strongest advantage and use it to get more people to buy. Competitive advantages usually stem from these 4 categories: 1) Price... 2) Quality... 3) Service... and 4) Exclusivity. The more areas you dominate, the greater your advantage and the more likely it is people will buy from you. Strive to be strong in at least 2 categories and you'll have a viable and sound business proposition.

51. Make your message of supreme importance to your target audience. Address a specific niche exclusively with a message of relevance and timeliness. With an ever-expanding array of choices and less personal time available, it's crucial that your words be personally significant to your target audience. A targeted approach is sure to cut through the clutter of competing messages.

52. Consider each and every ad or sales letter your one and only opportunity to influence your prospect to take action. Deliver the most appealing, benefit-laden offer you can... and always strive for action. Your piece should have a single purpose: to stimulate a positive response. Make each ad or sales letter justify itself. It's your salesperson that reaches out to communicate with hundreds or thousands of prospects. Make it as compelling as possible every time out.

53. Inject maximum value into your message by conveying information your prospect wants to know. Become an authority on your market and industry and then convey your level of expertise in your sales letter. Prospects will quickly recognize information of value and importance just as quickly as they'll spot obvious errors and BS. When you demonstrate genuine knowledge and expertise and have information of interest to the audience, you'll attract plenty of attention and action. Messages of no pertinent value to prospects are quickly cast aside.

54. Bridge the gap between where your prospect is now... and where s/he would like to be. That's the mission of your sales letter – to help the prospect get the end result he wants. Your product is the ultimate solution that can take the prospect out of misery and frustration into pure joy. But it's up to you to persuade them that buying your product is their best bet. You hold the power to give your prospect exactly what s/he wants. But you can only help when they're willing take action.

55. Give more. Make your message a worthwhile read. Deliver useful and practical information. Tell an interesting or dramatic story. Paint vivid pictures with your words. Inspire prospects to want the same benefits for themselves. Be different in a striking way and surprise readers with your unique angle or perspective. Offer an enriching experience simply by reading your letter.

56. Keep in mind the 2 main motives for action: the desire to avoid pain and the desire to gain pleasure. Most experts agree that avoiding pain is the stronger motivator of the two. But you'd be well advised to use the pain angle sparingly. The reason? You want to remind prospects of their pain briefly... in order to present your ultimate solution. Dwell too long on the negatives and you'll drive prospects away. They'll flee to avoid the pain and negative feelings you've just activated. A better alternative is to acknowledge the problem or symptom and then unleash the cure. Offer hope and help that has already proven effective and you'll gain an interested, attentive and responsive audience.

57. Motivate action by using time-tested emotional appeals. The words and technology we use has changed over the years — but human behavior hasn't. Prospects are still moved to action by the same basic wants. These include: longevity, love, sex, fame, fortune, pride, greed, power, salvation, hunger, self-development, quick fixes, acknowledgement, inside information, bargains, fear, and pity.

58. Promise quick results right up front in your headline. Ultimately, it's the end result people are after... and they don't want to have to wait to get it. They want to reap the rewards right away and the sooner – the better. By suggesting in your headline that your solution is a quick and easy one, you'll attract more interest. Instant gratification has tremendous appeal in many markets.

59. Appeal to your prospect's greed gland. Greed is a major factor in creating a strong offer. A loaded offer can help overcome fear and inertia. When it's simply too good to resist, the prospect is powerless to refuse and will overcome any obstacle not to miss out. Online prospects are not easily moved to spend money. They fear that the package they end up with will be less than they expect. They fear it will prove to be something they really didn't need. Or, they fear not being able to pay for the product without straining the budget. But an appeal that promises much more in value than it asks in price, invariably wins action because it's something the prospect finds irresistible and impossible to pass by.

Offers

60. Make prospects an offer they can't refuse by adding special bonuses, premiums, upgrades and gifts. Such incentives give the offer a much higher perceived value. The key is to make your bonus items exclusive, relevant, and in-demand by prospects. Overload them with additional benefits and value. Make it such a fabulous deal that they not only want it – but must have it NOW. Strong offers sell products. Give your offer massive prospect-appeal... and deliver it to the right prospect at the right time. Do so in a compelling way and you've got a surefire recipe for success.

61. Employ creative thinking to develop an outstanding offer. Consider how the prospect might be better served. What would give your product much more value and make it more desirable to own? Think in terms of added versatility, longer-life, easier to use, and shortcuts to the ultimate goal of buyers. Develop additional add-ons to make the combined package much more attractive than the product itself.

62. Make each individual component of your package as appealing as possible. Create bonus items (reports, ebooks, tips booklets, checklists, etc.) and give them interesting titles – titles that fuel a strong desire for ownership. Instead of sending out a free report offering tax saving tips... offer *“13 Completely Legal Ways To Slash Your Taxes By 50% Or More – Guaranteed!”* Make each bonus item itself worth the cost of the total package. Use words that denote tangible items – something of substance.

63. Improve response by improving your offer. If you're not getting the results you want, look at ways to improve your offer. Try new and different bonus items. Add upgrades and free service or consulting packages. Test new combinations of reports or booklets. If you want to dramatically improve your response – dramatically improve your offer.

64. The offer is the proposition you make to the prospect. It's the “deal” you're proposing – what you give in exchange for the asking price. The offer actually encompasses several different things, including: the basic product, all bonus incentives, price, payment terms, and any special conditions attached.

65. Make a single offer within each sales letter. Sell one thing at a time. It's okay to sell an upgraded package as a secondary option, as long as it doesn't complicate things for the prospect. Adding additional elements or conditions outside of your primary offer can cause confusion and confused prospects never buy.

66. Highlight your offer. Dramatize it. Get it in front of your prospects early and often. One option is to unveil your offer in a text box, immediately following the headline. This can work well when your offer is particularly strong. Recap the offer in your close or on the order form. Another option is to tell the story behind the offer – *“My partner thinks I'm nuts to give away all this... but I'm betting you'll help prove him wrong by taking advantage of this unprecedented offer while it lasts.”*

67. Make full use of premiums and bonuses as extra incentives to get prospects to take action. Additional items thrown in can help get the undecided prospect get off the fence. In essence, premiums are nothing more than ethical bribes, offered as an inducement to order. The reason for offering additional goodies is to encourage prompt responses. Premiums generally work better than discounts. What makes a premium an effective inducement is the demand – the desire of prospects to have or to own the bonus item. The best premiums are exclusive to the offer and completely unavailable through any other source.

Proof

68. Work hard to establish credibility. Become known to your target audience as a business that delivers quality products and great service. Be unique and original – that's the way to stand out from the rest of the pack. Inject your own personality and flair into your sales copy. Display congruence in all your communications. Walk your talk. Be reliable and attentive to those you serve. Respond gracefully and promptly to all inquiries and maintain a presence in the marketplace.

69. Make your message believable. Back up your claims with proof of performance. Detailed testimonials are the best way as they reveal specific results other customers have obtained. Full names, city of residence, web site URL's and telephone numbers all add to the credibility of any testimonial.

70. Present a compelling case for your product by adding elements that build human interest. Customer success stories add extra detail to brief testimonials, giving them additional meaning and relevance. Verbal descriptions and anecdotes help prospects grasp your meaning. This kind of illustration enhances understanding and believability.

71. Strengthen your sales copy with the use of specifics. Use precise, documented facts and figures. By employing specific numbers, you can transform weak or vague copy into something much more compelling. It often takes an extra effort on the part of the marketer to obtain this kind of raw and specific data, but doing so can add tremendously to your results. Clearly descriptive details provide a ring of truth – something a general description could never do.

72. Explain why you're making such an offer. Did you find a great deal on overstocked merchandise and you're passing the savings along to customers? Is it a special introductory offer to acquire new members? Or did you find a caseload of 'scratch and dent' products that you're offering at unbelievably low prices? Provide a sound reason for your offer. Be genuine. Follow through on your promise of limited quantities. The more real your offer appears, the more it will be believed and the greater the response.

73. Present your message in a way that overcomes skepticism and the general public's dislike for questionable or exaggerated advertising claims. Explain how such results are possible. Break it down for simplicity. Add logical reasons that help to justify and explain the claims you make.

Opening Copy

74. Convey an understanding of your audience early in your message. Convince your prospect that you know, understand, respect, and value him or her as a human being. That's the key to gaining an attentive ear. Do your homework and communicate with a thorough understanding of the prospect and his or her plight. Make the reader feel – *“yes, that's just like me.”*

75. Use plenty of sub-heads. The best use of sub-heads is to highlight them as bold passages of copy. If the prospect only scans your sales letter, he should get the essence of your message – the key points – by simply reading the sub-headings. The longer you can sustain the interest of your prospect, the more key points you can deliver in subsequent sub-heads and the greater your chances of ultimately winning the sale.

The Close

76. Create a sense of urgency. Give your prospect an extra advantage for ordering now. Do whatever it takes to get your prospect to cross the threshold and buy. Offer only limited quantities – a specific number of units or memberships available, or a time-limited offer. Include an extra bonus for even faster action. Emphasize the importance of responding now... so the prospect gets everything he wants without delay. Remind him of the cost of inaction and how the problems will likely persist if he fails to take the action necessary to effect change.

77. Charm prospects into action. Use your powers of seduction to woo them. Influence with gentle persuasion – don't push excessively for the sale. The most effective way to generate a positive response is to let prospects convince themselves. If you push too hard — you may get the sale, but it's less likely to stick. Present your case, prove your claims and overcome any resistance with a plausible explanation. Allow prospects to sell themselves.

78. Make it clear to prospects why it pays to act now, rather than at a later date. Premiums, bonuses, and gifts work well, as do limited offers – particularly those with impending deadlines. Another effective approach is to remind prospects of all they'll miss out on by not responding now. Stress the significance of the present moment – it's the only moment in time your prospect can count on. It's his or her moment of power. S/he can use it to make a real and lasting positive change in life... or s/he can squander the opportunity. The choice is up to each individual. Whatever they choose in the moment

can have profound implications. But each moment is fleeting. Once it's gone – it's gone forever.

79. Encourage a response by using the 'hot potato' technique. A 'hot potato' placed in the hands of your prospect requires an immediate response. It's a way of inducing a feeling of obligation or guilt to take some kind of action in turn. An RSVP is a mild form of a 'hot potato'. Readers Digest used this technique many years ago when it attached two pennies to the top of a sales letter sent through the mail. The letter opened with this quotation: *"If thou hast two pennies, spend one for bread. With the other, buy hyacinths for thy soul."* The pennies were used as tokens to stimulate response – and it worked magically. Readers were asked to "just slip one penny into the pocket in the enclosed card, and mail today." It proved to be one of their most successful sales letters ever used.

80. Ask prospects for their business. Be sure to ask for the order at least one and preferably several times. Asking for the order early and often conveys confidence in your product and gives your sales letter a definite purpose.

Follow-Up

81. Communicate repeatedly. Online, the most popular way to do this is through your own newsletter or ezine. Regular communication to your market can also be maintained with occasional articles, discussion board posts, or regular updates to a members-only site. All are simple and remarkably inexpensive ways to stay in touch with any number of prospects.

82. Persist with prospects by reaching them again and again. Many will not respond the first time they're exposed to your offer. But an initial negative response doesn't mean they're not interested and won't buy from you in the future. There are many reasons why interested prospects don't buy – most having to do with their individual circumstances at the moment. Give them an opportunity to see your message again by offering a free subscription to your newsletter, or updating your site often with fresh content.

83. Continually add products to your line-up. Obvious products to add are natural extensions of your most previously released product. The whole idea of a successful, automated business is to continually sell to your customers over time.

84. Observe the 80/20 Rule: 80% of your repeat business will likely come from 20% of your customers. In order to maximize your profit, you need to know the customers who fit into the 20% group, and those who make up the rest. Direct your follow-up sales effort first and foremost towards the most profitable segment of your in-house list.

85. Tap into your greatest asset – your customer list – repeatedly to maximize revenue and profits. A satisfied customer is money in the bank to you, as long as you treat them right by continually offering great products and superb service. Protect your customer list.

Treat it as the precious resource it is. Keep it active and up to date through periodic use. Keep customers informed. Let them know in advance about special sales and give them the opportunity to take advantage of your discounts before the general public. Acknowledge every purchase. Employ a loyalty or frequent buyer program. Periodically survey customers to gather feedback then use this information to constantly deliver exactly what your customers want. Think from your customer's perspective and offer ways for them to continually benefit from your business.

86. Monitor your list to determine the specific value of each customer. 3 factors come into play here: 1) Recency of purchase... 2) Frequency of buying... and 3) Average dollar value of each purchase. Use this information to not only anticipate purchasing behavior in the future, but to guide your marketing efforts for maximum returns.

87. Give non-buyers an opportunity to stay connected. If they're interested enough in your products and ideas to request future contact from you, they still hold value as potential customers. Provide additional options secondarily, as a means of keeping in touch. These might include catalogue offers, contests, and newsletter subscriptions, even an "add me to your mailing list" option. You could also offer an invitation to return to your website periodically for new updated material.

88. Consider using pop-up windows as a last-minute attempt to capture a lukewarm prospect. Offer a free report or subscription to your ezine, thereby gaining permission to add their name and email address to your prospects list. Another way to use pop-ups is to repeat your offer or emphasize an exceptional guarantee. It can be an effective method to convince a prospect to stick around when they were on their way out the door. Be careful not to overdo it – one pop-up window is enough. Many people who find pop-ups annoying are usually willing to accept one. Any more than that can be problematic.

89. Nudge the undecided prospect with a "lift" letter. These are short, powerful notes that take a different perspective and strive to persuade those still sitting on the fence to take action. This is another effective way to use a pop-up window to take one final opportunity to win a favorable response. This extra push works best when the words are spoken by another person – preferable a happy customer or someone of high standing — in the prospect's eyes. The purpose here is to get them to reconsider and to reassure them that they have nothing to worry about.

Design

90. Design your piece to sell. An attractive appearance is secondary to providing a basic layout that facilitates and expedites sales. Design your piece to make it easier for the reader to grasp your message, realize the major benefits, and to understand the offer and guarantee — quickly and easily. Make it easy for prospects to continue through to the order form without any obstruction or distraction.

91. Avoid shouting. Large type... all uppercase characters... a multitude of bright colors... and flashing graphics are often perceived as excessive or forceful communication. Use the power of key words to deliver your important message. Communicate personally, one-on-one, even though your sales letter may reach millions. If you were trying to influence a friend, you wouldn't shout at them. Tone down the graphics and let your words work their magic.

92. Employ graphics that contribute strongly to your sales message. Your copy is the most important element of your web site in terms of generating sales. The longer you can keep prospects reading your words, the greater the chances are of winning them over. Choose graphics that help convey a benefit and are congruent with your copy. The purpose of graphics in sales letters is not to distract readers, but to clarify or emphasize a benefit and to keep them reading.

93. Design your letter to capture the scanning reader. Let's face it... most sales letters are never read in their entirety. Review your completed sales letter as prospects likely do. Are you turning them off before you get a chance to really turn them on? Do you make your pitch too soon in the process? Does the prospect have the opportunity to grasp your essential message and your strongest benefits by scanning highlighted areas? Make these key areas work in your favor, as they are your most valuable sales letter tools.

94. Design your letter to guide prospects in the specific direction and sequence you want them to go. Large objects and type are among the first things a visitor notices... so it makes sense to set your main headline in a size that's noticeably larger than the body copy. The eye is also drawn towards anything that seems out of place. Make use of different shapes, shades, colors, and design enhancements to deliver key bits of information in a way that's guaranteed to be noticed. Bold, darker areas also command attention over their less dominant counterparts. Point action photos towards the copy rather than away from it to keep prospects reading. Use captions with every image and employ them to deliver mini headlines.

95. Add dimension by adjusting the weight of specific copy areas. Headlines should be big and bold. Sub-headings should be noticeably smaller than main headlines, yet larger and bolder than body copy. Some variation in types styles helps avoid a flat, boring look. Consider using shades, colors, and frames to highlight key points and bring attention to them, while at the same time providing much needed visual relief.

96. Avoid using columns of text that are too wide. A good width is 35 to 55 characters. A page of this width is relatively easy for the eye to scan over. Allow adequate spacing to frame the text and set it off from the rest of the page. Wide columns are more difficult to read, require extra time and frustrate the reader. Look at any newspaper. They use columns that are as narrow as can be. Why? One reason: to aid readability. Another option is to use multiple columns, though you don't see this used much in sales letters.

97. Stick with proven color combinations for clarity, crispness, and ease of reading. Black text on a white or off-white background is best. Any variation beyond black text on a white background starts to affect clarity. The idea is to have maximum contrast. With a background that's too dark, or text that's too light, reading becomes more difficult.

98. Align your text to the left. It's more eye appealing and readable that way. Everyone learns to read English from top to bottom, left to right. That's how your prospects have been conditioned to read. So the left side of your page naturally draws the eye – this is what readers are used to. Centered or right-aligned text seems awkward and unnatural. Justified text spreads the body copy equally across the span of the column... but it doesn't allow for any natural resting places for the eye.

99. Make your letter easy to scan. Most prospects quickly skim through with one finger on the trigger. They're ready to be whisked away to another site the second they become disinterested in your message. No one likes to waste time – least of all your busy prospects. Give them the essence of your message where they expect to find it, namely in the headline, sub-heading, initial copy points, text boxes, opening copy, additional sub-heads, the guarantee and the postscript. Make each element as strong as can be so the prospect is compelled to spend more time learning about your product. The longer he stays, the greater the chances of getting the sale.

100. Make each key element a visual grabber. The skimming prospect could conceivably begin reading your sales letter in detail at any point. Each key element has the power to accelerate the prospect's level of interest. Make full use of occasional test boxes, bold and italic type, indented copy, secondary colors, etc. to deliver a message with punch. Start each page of a multi-page message with a compelling grabber. Hit hard and hit fast with key information that's set apart. It's your best opportunity to capture attention, increase interest, and woo serious prospects in.

101. Choose a font that's easy to read. For on-screen reading, a Sans Serif font like *Arial*, *Helvetica* or *Verdana* is best. Its clean lines are easier to distinguish on a monitor. In print, the opposite is true. Serif fonts (those with line extensions that appear to lead from one character to the next) are easier to read on the printed page. For those prospects that prefer reading on paper, a Serif font such as *Courier* or *Times* works well.

102. Employ tools of emphasis... but do so sparingly. You can often emphasize an important point with bold, italic, yellow highlights, or underscored type. Exercise caution and restraint when using the underlining option online since most users have come to expect underlined text to represent a live link. Bullets are an effective way to emphasize benefits. Bullets can be round, square, or diamond-shaped in a solid fill. Square, hollowed bullets are also great for checklists, as are checkmarks. Indented paragraphs and bold text are easy ways to emphasize important points, but the secret is to use them occasionally, rather than often. The idea is to make your copy interesting and eye appealing – without overdoing it.

Polish It Up

103. Your objective is to elicit a positive response – either to make a direct sale or to generate a lead. Therefore, everything you write in your sales letter should contribute to that goal. Tighten your copy and eliminate the fluff. Scrutinize every word. If the word, phrase, sentence, or paragraph helps make the sale, it belongs. If it doesn't it, delete it.

104. Read your copy out loud. It's the most effective way to spot any glitches. Does your copy appeal to the ear as well as the eye? If your copy doesn't flow smoothly, it needs to be re-written. Good sales copy doesn't draw attention to itself; it merely resonates with the reader and engages his senses. Any potential stumbling block needs to be removed. Anything that causes the reader to pause because the meaning wasn't absolutely clear, gives the reader a reason to move on.

105. Pay attention to the impact of word substitutions. Slight changes can sometimes significantly alter the meaning of your message, thereby changing the impact and the results produced. Following are 3 examples:

Try vs. Examine – Trying is less of a risk and requires less perceived work

Think vs. Thought – “Think” is present tense and implies immediate change

Replace vs. Substitute – Replacing suggests an upgrade. Substitution suggests the next best thing – a step below.

106. Get right to the point. Avoid the warm-up that could turn off many potential buyers. Say something of critical interest and importance straight away. Tell prospects how they can gain a major benefit early in your copy – preferably within the headline and first few lines of text. You want to make an emotional connection as quickly as possible.

107. Anticipate competitor's reactions to your offer. Think of possible ways your competitors might counter your offer and beat them to the punch. This helps you keep a step ahead and maintain an edge in the marketplace.