

\$64,000 Direct Mail Self-Promotion Package!



**A Step-by-Step Blueprint For Building Your
Own Blockbuster Mailing From Scratch**

By Pete Savage

An Important Message to All Readers

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This Edition Published by:

TheWealthyFreelancer.com

2028 Drogheda Lane

Marietta, GA 30066

Email: support@thewealthyfreelancer.com

Web: www.thewealthyfreelancer.com

Produced in Canada

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Chapter 1

Why Direct Mail?

“When other writers ask me, ‘*What is the most effective self-promotion for you?*’ I answer without hesitation: direct mail.”

- Bob Bly, from *Secrets of a Freelance Writer*

What’s the most common problem among freelancers?

Having too many poor or mediocre clients.

These are clients that don’t truly value the freelancer's services or clients that have small budgets.

Most every freelancer has had (or still has) more than their fair share of poor clients. But poor clients can *kill* your freelance business because they slowly and regularly eat away at your time, leaving you with less time to focus on attracting and servicing high quality clients.

For us freelancers then, the ultimate goal of any self-promotion initiative is to find *quality* clients who are willing to pay well, and who will keep us busy with a regular stream of profitable work.

Why is direct mail so effective for us freelancers?

Because it’s the most accurate and efficient self-promotion tool for pinpointing the exact companies you want to go after and win over.

A solid direct mail strategy is your ticket to generating a stable of better clients, no matter if you’re a seasoned pro, just starting out, or anywhere in between.

Can you employ other marketing tactics aside from direct mail? Certainly. Let’s look at a few of the things you could do...

- You could spend hours mastering the myriad of search engine optimization techniques required to rank high enough on search engine pages to make an impact (only to risk being bumped deeper down the list the very next day by competitors who spend even longer doing the same thing);
- You could spend a small fortune testing and retesting pay-per-click advertising, and wondering if the reason why it's not paying off is because you haven't quite yet found the right combination of words for your one-inch ad, or because virtually no one clicks on pay-per-click ads, regardless of what they say, when they manage to find what they're looking for in the organic search results;
- You could spend even more money running small space ads in trade magazines, only to find out what other freelancers who have gone before you already know: *they just don't work*; or,
- You could dial hundreds of phone numbers, and leave cheerful (but largely ineffective) voice mail messages for hundreds of ice-cold prospects who've never heard of you.

Now, granted, you may have success with *some* of the options above, but the first three options mentioned share a major drawback in that they are not *targeted* tactics. In other words, they require that you invest your time and energy trying to attract the attention of people whom *you did not specifically choose* to go after.

The fourth option above, cold calling, is at least targeted. However, with the prevalence of voice mail, its effectiveness has been reduced and pales in comparison to the impact you can make with direct mail.

There certainly are other marketing tactics you can try. Article marketing, for example, can be quite effective over time. It is a tactic that requires some germination before you see results, however, and it is also a largely untargeted endeavour.

In contrast to all of the above methods, only direct mail gives you complete control over three critical factors which, when optimized, can work in your favour to generate *powerful* results by attracting the kind of clients who will give you high-paying, regular, repeat assignments.

These three factors are:

1. The Offer (what you're offering to your target audience)
2. The Copy (the words you use in your sales letter to entice action)
3. The List (the people to whom you are mailing)

I'll show you how to put all three factors together into a direct mail promotion that helps you climb out of the poor client trap for good.

This ebook gives you specific insight into the sales letter and offer I used to generate \$64,000 in new business in just 12 months from a list of less than 100 names.

At the end of the ebook, I have two free resources for you with tips on how to put together your offer and how to build your list.

So, now that you know how effective direct mail can be, are you ready to put a winning self-promotion campaign under the microscope and learn everything you need to create your own blockbuster package?

Great! Let's begin...

Chapter 2

The Complete Package

Direct mail can come in all shapes and sizes. From a small postcard-sized promotion, to expensive, professionally designed and printed multi-dimensional packages.

Now, as a freelancer, you'll be paying for everything out of your own pocket, so is it actually possible to put a direct mail package together that is powerful enough to make an impact without breaking the bank?

You bet it is. And not only is it possible, it's quite simple to do.

I wrote, produced, and assembled for mailing, a hugely successful direct mail package all from my own home. It generated \$64,000 in income for me, from new clients in 12 months – and more than \$100,000 in billings from those clients in total.

The complete package consists of:

- 2-page sales letter
- 1 plastic pop-up shoe polisher
- 1 return envelope
- 6" x 9" Kraft bubble-lined outer envelope

And that's it! On the next page, you'll see what all the pieces look like:



In the chapters that follow you'll find out absolutely everything about this direct mail package, including full colour images of all four pieces, where I sourced the material, how much everything cost and how I put it all together using Microsoft Word and a few envelope-stuffing volunteers (i.e. helpful family members).

Let's begin with a look at the two-page sales letter. The next chapter shows you the sales letter in its entirety, and is followed by a line-by-line analysis of its content, so you can see the strategy behind every word that made this direct mail package a winner.

Chapter 3

The Sales Letter

Well, here it is. On the next two pages you'll see the complete sales letter, which is the true workhorse of any direct mail package.

I can't begin to tell you how many hours went into building this sales letter, but I can tell you it went through countless drafts on my own before I arrived at a version I was happy with.

In this chapter, you'll get to see the sales letter in its entirety.

In Chapter 4 I'll put the sales letter under a magnifying glass, and take you through a line-by-line analysis, so you can understand my strategy for building this sales letter the way I did.

Then, in Chapter 5, I give you the 10-Step Formula for Writing a Winning Sales Letter, so you can go about writing a lead-generating masterpiece for your business, no matter who your target audience.

The rest of the chapters give you all the details on the rest of the direct mail package, plus some invaluable tips and advice that you'll want to keep handy when you sit down to create your own direct mail winner.

The audience for this sales letter is marketing directors, managers and VPs at technology industry companies.

When the whole office stares at you in smiling admiration, you'll want to look your best

(Hang on to the shoe polisher)

Dear John,

It takes guts to be a marketing professional, don't you think? Let's face it, your boss, your colleagues, and the sales team all expect you to know your target customer inside and out.

Everyone watches your marketing campaigns to see what happens. Will you bring in the leads? Speed up the sales cycle? Or totally miss the mark and waste a pile of money?

As a marketer, you've accepted the pressures that come with putting your high profile campaigns on show, for everyone in the office to see (and judge you by). That's gutsy.

However, unless you know – beyond a shadow of a doubt – how to influence decision makers in your industry, you're taking big risks with your marketing campaigns, not to mention your reputation and your career. That's not gutsy – that's crazy.

Do you know the most effective way to influence technology buyers today? You will when you read this FREE report:

The Web's Most Powerful Tool for Influencing Technology Buyers... And The Big Mistake 9 out of 10 Marketing Directors Make When They Try To Use It

MarketingSherpa™, JupiterResearch™ and ITtoolbox™ asked thousands of technology buyers to identify what influences their purchase decisions. This report has the answers.

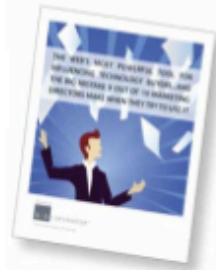
You'll also see the results of my survey of 500 industry web sites (yours is one of them) which



(Update contact info below)

Return Address:

John Sample
Cool Company
1234 Software Street
Tech City, CA 90261
USA



Order Your FREE Report!

**The Web's Most Powerful Tool For
Influencing Technology Buyers...
And The Big Mistake 9 out of 10
Marketing Directors Make When
They Try to Use It**



My email is: _____

We respect your privacy. Report will be emailed (PDF).

Mail to:

PETE SAVAGE, B2B COPYWRITER
3 BELGRAVE AVE SUITE B
LONDON, ON N6C 4B3
CANADA

- Fax this page to **519-964-3211**
- Call **1-866-785-7855**
- Tear off and mail this order slip using the enclosed window envelope, or
- Visit **www.petesavage.com/lookgood**

reveals the huge mistake most technology companies make online and how to avoid it, or fix it, yourself (it's surprisingly easy, and clearly explained for you on page 8).

Here's what you'll see in the report:

- ✓ The #1 online tool for influencing tech buyers, based on thousands surveyed (page 3)
- ✓ A simple tip sheet on how to quickly and easily put this tool to work (page 8)
- ✓ The surprise finding from my survey of 500 software and technology web sites, which reveals what 9 out of 10 tech marketers *aren't* doing online – *but should be!* (page 4)
- ✓ A cost comparison of the top 5 tactics for influencing tech buyers (page 5)
- ✓ Data from trusted independent third parties, specifically, MarketingSherpa, ITtoolbox and JupiterResearch – and more.

What else does this report give you?

In addition to this critical target market insight, this report gives you the one thing most successful businesspeople swear by as being key to their success: **access to expertise**. Great leaders surround themselves with experts who make their jobs easier, and make them look good.

That's exactly what I will do for you. My name is Pete Savage, and I'm a B2B Copywriter specializing in Software and Technology. I write lead generation and sales communication materials for companies like Motorola, NCR, and Allstream. And I make marketing professionals like you look very, VERY good around the office.

You can learn more about me anytime at my website (www.petesavage.com) but for now, soak up all the information I've prepared for you in my FREE report:

**The Web's Most Powerful Tool for Influencing Technology Buyers...
And The Big Mistake 9 out of 10 Marketing Directors
Make When They Try to Use It**

If we marketers have a universal motto, it is these three words: **"Know your audience."** You'll know your audience even better when you read this report. Requesting your FREE copy is easy!

Visit www.petesavage.com/lookgood. Call 1-866-785-7855. Fax page one of this letter to me at 519-964-3211. Or cut off the order slip on page one and mail it to me in the window envelope. Request your FREE copy right now. You'll be glad you did.

PETE SAVAGE



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3 Belgrave Avenue, Suite B
London, ON Canada N6C 4B3

Sincerely,

Pete Savage

P.S. Decision makers in your target market have told us what gets their attention.

Find out how to best influence their purchase decisions, and get the surprising results of my industry survey of 500 web sites (including yours). It's all in the FREE report available for you right now at www.petesavage.com/lookgood.

Chapter 4

Line-by-Line Analysis of a Winning Sales Letter

The sales letter you just read was so effective because it follows a very specific 10-step Formula, which is explained in detail for you in Chapter 5. Before we talk about the formula, however, this chapter shows you a detailed, line-by-line analysis of the sales letter from start to finish, so you can understand the strategy behind each word.

When you've finished reading this chapter, you'll understand precisely *why* this sales letter was so effective, and you'll pick up a tonne of tips and techniques – every one of which you can use to create your sales letter.

This chapter, and the next, will save you hours of writing time, and prevent you from going around in circles wondering how to get started.



Quick Tip: It's a good idea to print out an extra copy of the two-page sales letter, so you can easily refer to it as you read the line-by-line analysis in this chapter, and the 10-step formula in Chapter 5.

This analysis is 16 pages long, and it's *very* detailed. But it's full of useful information that you'll want to absorb, so grab a coffee, settle in, and let's get started, beginning with a close look at the headline...

The Headline:

When the whole office stares at you in smiling admiration, you'll want to look your best (Hang on to the shoe polisher)

To understand why this headline is so powerful, it's important to understand the audience: corporate marketing directors, managers, and VPs.

These marketing types tend to be people who like the spotlight, who thrive on attention, and are genuinely proud to be in marketing.

In other words, these people have strong ego-centric needs. So, I wrote a headline that directly appeals to their strong sense of pride and their desire for attention and approval from others.

Hence, the words, "When the whole office stares at you in smiling admiration" and "look your best" are used to appeal directly to this audience's ego needs.



Quick Tip: The word "you" is one of the most powerful words in copywriting, so look for opportunities to include it throughout your letter copy, headline and/or subheads. I managed to squeeze TWO instances of "you" into my headline.

The final line, "(Hang on to the shoe polisher)" is important because it specifically points to the enclosed bulky item, tying it in nicely with the overall theme of the package.

Why did I put parenthesis around "(Hang on to the shoe polisher)"?

Because I wanted this sentence to come across as though it was a quiet little whisper in the reader's ear from me, as though I'm the reader's secret weapon, looking out for him, thinking of things he wouldn't even

think of. You can almost hear the imaginary conversation I'm going for in his head...

ME: "Psssst, here, take this shoe polisher and make yourself look nice. You're gonna need it."

READER: "What? Oh! Thanks Pete!" {Pockets the shoe polisher before anyone even notices.}

Now you may think I'm certifiably CRAZY to have sat around imagining voices in other people's heads BUT... this is *precisely* what you need to do if you are to truly write a sales letter that *gets inside the head of your prospect*.

Try it! What do you want your target audience to think of *you*? The better you can know them, the better you'll be able to understand (even anticipate) their thoughts, and the better your direct marketing efforts will be.



Quick Tip: Note the length of each of the three, centred lines in the headline. The line at the top is the longest; the line at the bottom is the shortest.

This layout style is intentional, as it creates an upside-down triangle effect to guide the reader's eye downward. This is a proven headline technique that boosts readability, so I recommend you don't stray from it.

The Body (Page One of the Sales Letter):

The opening line of the letter is critical because it's right here that your letter is judged (by the reader) as to whether or not it will be relevant to him. This opening line plays a big role in determining whether or not your prospect will keep reading the letter, so you have to hit him with everything you've got.

My opening sentence, It takes guts to be a marketing professional, don't you think? has three things going for it:

1. It upholds the appeal to the ego needs of the reader by calling him gutsy.

2. It asks a question. This is a proven effective way to begin a sales letter. The human brain thrives on solving problems and naturally snaps to attention when it encounters a question.
3. It squeezes in another instance of the word “you”.

The next sentence, Let’s face it, your boss, your colleagues, and the sales team all expect you to know your target customer inside and out., makes a strong connection with the reader because it clearly points out to him the real expectations that real people place on him around the office.

Because these are real issues that marketers face every day, the sentence makes them think,

“This letter is relevant to me. This is exactly what I’m up against.”

The next few sentences absolutely nail the key issues that marketers wrestle with every day, beginning with: Everyone watches your marketing campaigns to see what happens.

I continue, throwing these questions at them: Will you bring in the leads? Speed up the sales cycle? Or totally miss the mark and waste a pile of money?

These are the very same questions I *know* are rattling around in their psyche. And by bringing them up, I rouse a little bit of anxiety in their minds.

With this anxiety stirred up a little, I let loose: However, unless you know – beyond a shadow of a doubt – how to influence decision makers in your industry, you’re taking big risks with your marketing campaigns, not to mention your reputation and your career.

Now, I could have stopped that paragraph halfway through, after you’re taking big risks with your marketing campaigns but no way! That’s not painful enough!

Instead, I keep fanning the flames, going just far enough to really elevate the pain, by pointing out the impending risks to reputation and career. (Very real risks, by the way. *Any* marketer who delivers too many lackluster campaigns will be out of a job. And *every* marketer knows this.)

I then go one step further, with five little words that swiftly *take away* the compliment I gave them at the opening of the letter: That’s not gutsy – that’s crazy.

Now because ego-centric people would rather be thought of as gutsy, not crazy, this little threat to their self image cuts deep.

So now that I've *really* got their attention, I ask them a big question: Do you know the most effective way to influence technology buyers today?

Up to this point in the letter, I've rustled up a little anxiety in the reader's mind by throwing a bunch of problems at him including job security risks, threats to ego and image and, finally, asked him point-blank if he knows the *best* way to influence his target audience. (That's a really tough question for anyone to answer with absolute certainty, so I'm betting the answer in the reader's heads will be a sheepish "No.")

Everything up to now is designed to make the reader feel a certain degree of anxiety. With his anxiety on the rise, *now* is the time to present him with a solution to the problems I've pointed out. I do this by introducing my report: You will when you read this FREE report:

**The Web's Most Powerful Tool for Influencing Technology Buyers...
And The Big Mistake 9 out of 10 Marketing Directors
Make When They Try To Use It**

So the solution to his problems (problems which *existed* but likely weren't swirling around at the *forefront* of his mind *until* he began to read my letter) is handed to him in the form of my free report.

The title of the report is carefully constructed, and it's very powerful because it conforms to these four criteria:

4 Criteria for Creating a Killer Report Title

1. **Make a promise.** The report promises to reveal "The Web's Most Powerful Tool for Influencing Technology Buyers." This is quite an intriguing promise for my audience of marketing directors, because their companies *sell* software and technology. (As a result these marketing types want nothing more than to influence technology buyers.)
2. **Arouse curiosity.** If you were a marketing director, wouldn't you be a bit curious about "The Big Mistake 9 out of 10 Marketing Directors Make"? And wouldn't you love to get your hands on a report that reveals this big mistake?

3. **Identify the audience.** Notice the report is not called “The Big Mistake 9 out of 10 *Companies* Make.” That’s because I’m not sending my sales letter to *companies*, I’m sending it to human beings who are *marketing directors*. Therefore, I use “*marketing directors*” in the title of the report, so that there is absolutely no doubt in the reader's mind that this report is specifically for *him*.
4. **Be specific.** “9 out of 10 companies” sounds very specific and, by extension, credible. It sounds like there was in fact some research done to arrive at this number (Which, in fact, there was.)

A great title will essentially do the hard work of selling your report for you, so that all you need to do is draw attention to it like I do in the letter, by bumping up the font and using an attention-getting colour.

Now, having read the title of the report, the reader suddenly has high hopes for what this report will contain. It’s vital that we don’t disappoint!

And so the very next sentence mentions that the report contains information from a handful of well-respected, well-known (to the reader) organizations: MarketingSherpa™, JupiterResearch™ and ITtoolbox™ asked thousands of technology buyers to identify what influences their purchase decisions. This report has the answers.

See what happens here? By name-dropping these organizations, I’ve leveraged the credibility that they enjoy in the mind of this audience! As a result, my report is suddenly perceived by the reader to possess a certain level of credibility.

(The free report itself does, of course, contain properly credited information from all of these parties.)

The next sentence is critical, because it’s the last sentence on page one of this two-page letter. It *must* give the reader a strong reason to keep reading, because in order to keep reading, the reader must turn to page two. Now that sounds like no big deal, just turn the page, right?

Well, put yourself in the reader’s shoes for a second, and think about the millions of distractions that could occur at that precise moment when he’s reading that last sentence on page one...

The phone could ring, the boss could walk in, an email could arrive, an instant message (IM) could pop-up on their computer screen, his pager / BlackBerry / cell phone could start buzzing, the power could go out in his building... OR, worst of all, he could just plain LOSE INTEREST in your letter on that final sentence and not bother to flip to page two.

So, you want that last line to hold his attention, and stand up against each and every one of those potential interruptions, so that last line has to be a doozie. Here's how I do it:

You'll also see the results of my survey of 500 industry web sites (yours is one of them) which

This sentence tells the reader that I have actually personally visited their web site as part of a survey I conducted. This is likely to stir up that voice in the reader's mind again, and set off a flurry of questions like...

"What was this survey about?"

"Why did this person pick my company's web site to visit?"

"Who is this person anyway?"

The human brain is curious by nature. It *loves* to ask questions and, lucky for me, it wants to find answers, almost as soon as the little voice asks the question, it's saying:

"Turn the page! Turn the page!"

Also, this sentence is intentionally left hanging with the word "which" In order to finish the sentence, the reader *has to* turn the page.



Quick Tip: If your sales letter is two pages or more, always make sure the last sentence on the page continues at the top of the next page. In fact, if your sentence ends with a period, rewrite it, or end the letter a line earlier. Do whatever it takes, without sacrificing the quality of the writing, so that the final sentence on a page is "to be continued" at the top of the next page.

For now, we'll skip the order form area at the bottom of page one, so we can continue with our analysis of the body of the sales letter. Later

on we'll have a good long look at all the elements of that order form area.

The Body Continued (Page Two of the Sales Letter):

Page two begins with the continuation of the sentence from the end of page one (remember, it ended with the word “which”):

reveals the huge mistake most technology companies make online and how to avoid it, or fix it, yourself

Here I'm telling them that the report “reveals” (implying that they don't know this information yet) the huge mistake that technology companies make.

I purposely say “technology” companies because the recipients of this sales letter all work in high-tech industry companies.

And, just in case the voice in the reader's head says,

“Fix it myself? Sounds like a lot of work!”,

I quickly point out: (it's surprisingly easy, and clearly explained for you on page 8).

Why mention the page number? It helps give the report some “depth” in the mind of the reader, and suddenly makes it seem more real, tangible and substantial in the mind of the reader.

Next comes a subhead, followed by a bulleted (checkmarked) list

Here's what you'll see in the report:

- ✓ The #1 online tool for influencing tech buyers, based on thousands surveyed (page 3)
- ✓ A simple tip sheet on how to quickly and easily put this tool to work (page 8)
- ✓ The surprise finding from my survey of 500 software and technology web sites, which reveals what 9 out of 10 tech marketers *aren't* doing online – *but should be!* (page 4)
- ✓ A cost comparison of the top 5 tactics for influencing tech buyers (page 5)
- ✓ Data from trusted independent third parties, specifically, MarketingSherpa, ITtoolbox and JupiterResearch – and more.

First, let's look at the subhead.

As early as possible in page two, I introduce a subhead, to break up the look of the copy and keep the reader reading!

I don't want to hit the reader with a big chunk of text four or five lines long. Instead I give him two lines, then a subhead, then a bulleted list. (I use checkmarks instead of bullets and I'll tell you why in a minute.)

What I'm doing is rewarding the reader for flipping the page with a page that looks very easy to read at-a-glance. This tells the reader: *"Hey, this is easy to read! Look, just two lines of text! And then look, bullets!"*

There's that voice in the reader's head again. You may laugh... but this is the way we humans think when faced with reading material. If we see long blocks of text that look like they belong in a textbook on taxation law, and if we have any choice in the matter, we move on.

But if we come across a carefully worded subhead, and list of bullets with a pleasing splash of colour, we're much more likely to keep reading.

Speaking of the bullets, let's look at them again.

- ✓ The #1 online tool for influencing tech buyers, based on thousands surveyed (page 3)
- ✓ A simple tip sheet on how to quickly and easily put this tool to work (page 8)
- ✓ The surprise finding from my survey of 500 software and technology web sites, which reveals what 9 out of 10 tech marketers *aren't* doing online – *but should be!* (page 4)
- ✓ A cost comparison of the top 5 tactics for influencing tech buyers (page 5)
- ✓ Data from trusted independent third parties, specifically, MarketingSherpa, ITtoolbox and JupiterResearch – and more.

Notice how detailed I am in the sentences that follow each checkmark.

Rather than talking about the report as though it's some mysterious document, I'm giving the readers a glimpse at what's inside, and whetting their appetite by being specific about the valuable information that awaits them. I'm not just mentioning the report, I'm *illuminating* it!

It's worth mentioning the use of page numbers here again. In addition to adding depth to the report as explained above, adding page

numbers is also a subtle way to add credibility to your claims, because you're essentially offering proof that the report is what you say it is.

The reader can choose to either believe, or not believe, anything you say. So when you specifically mention page numbers, the reader assumes your claims to be true because, frankly, why would anyone list specific page numbers if the information wasn't really there? It would be too easy to get caught in the lie.



Quick Tip: Use coloured checkmarks in sales letters instead of bullets. Why? One reason is because big, brightly coloured checkmarks jump off the page and catch the eye, whereas bullets are just plain boring. More importantly, checkmarks subliminally say “YES!” as in “*YES! This point is important!*” And “*YES! So is this one!*” and “*YES! This one is too!*”

Throughout your sales letter, you want as many “YES!” moments popping up in the reader’s mind, subliminally or not, as possible.

At the end of the bulleted list, we see another subhead:

What else does this report give you?

Look at the letter, and just pretend that subhead isn’t there for a second. Notice that the sales letter would still transition smoothly from the bulleted list to the sentence that begins “In addition to this critical target market insight,”

So why add the subhead if we don’t need it? In fact, we *do* need it, for a couple reasons.

First, remember that this is page two and we need to assume that, by now, the reader might be getting a little tired of reading and/or distracted by whatever else is going on around the office.

I always assume that the reader has a hundred other things to do that are more important than reading my letter because, frankly, he does! But I’m not giving in without a fight, so I throw in that nice, bold headline to grab the reader’s attention and keep them reading.

This subhead works because it incorporates those two proven attention getting techniques again – asking a question, and using the magic word “you.”

Here’s the subhead again with the paragraph that follows it...

What else does this report give you?

In addition to this critical target market insight, this report gives you the one thing most successful businesspeople swear by as being key to their success: **access to expertise**.

I purposely bolded the words “access to expertise” because these three words essentially answer the question in the subhead. Anyone who might be skimming through the letter, rather than reading word for word, sees the subhead question, “What else does this report give you?” and then picks out the answer, “access to expertise”.

People who are still reading the letter word for word clearly like what they’re seeing, so the next sentence flatters them, indirectly, by saying they’re “Great leaders”:

Great leaders surround themselves with experts who make their jobs easier, and make them look good.

That sentence is also there because it’s almost time to introduce myself, so I want to introduce the notion of surrounding oneself with “experts” and the benefits that experts deliver to those “great leaders” who use them, specifically, “make their jobs easier” and “make them look good.”

Now I’m ready to introduce myself, and just before I do, I lead into my introduction by making a promise:

That’s exactly what I will do for you.

Let’s pause for a second. Did you notice something? Look how far we are at this point in the letter. We’re about three-quarters of the way through and this is the *first* time I’ve used the word “I”!

(The next chapter explains the reason why in the 10-Step Formula for Writing a Successful Sales Letter).

Up until now, I haven’t even *hinted* at mentioning my own name or my business, or even what I do for a living, but I finally do so now:

My name is Pete Savage, and I'm a B2B Copywriter specializing in Software and Technology. I write lead generation and sales communication materials for companies like Motorola, NCR, and Allstream.

I was fortunate enough by my third year of freelance copywriting to have worked on a handful of projects for companies well known in the industry, so of course I mentioned them. (The next chapter shows you what you can say if you can't mention client names – but don't worry about this in the least, because that sentence is not as important as the one that immediately follows.)

After I mention myself, I immediately throw the spotlight back on the reader:

And I make marketing professionals like **you look very, VERY good around the office**.

The words “you look very, VERY good around the office” make no bones about the benefit I'm promising. And they're bold and underlined, of course, to catch the eye of the skimmers.

Now when it comes to talking about yourself, there's a difference between reigning yourself in and coming across as being overly cagey.

So I quickly tell the reader he can learn more about me on my website and then, again, I immediately throw the spotlight on the report:

You can learn more about me anytime at my website (www.petesavage.com) but for now, soak up all the information I've prepared for you in my FREE report:

**The Web's Most Powerful Tool for Influencing Technology Buyers...
And The Big Mistake 9 out of 10 Marketing Directors
Make When They Try to Use It**

Am I worried that by sending the reader to my website that he'll forget all about the report? Nope, because my home page is designed to promote the very same report! If a reader decided to visit www.petesavage.com at any point while reading the sales letter, he would be just one click away from ordering the report!

Later in this ebook, you'll see what my home page looked like when this package mailed, so you can see how closely it matched the sales letter.

(Note: My home page has changed since this sales letter first mailed.)

It's also a good idea to draw attention to your web site, because it helps establish your credibility. When the reader sees "www.petesavage.com" mentioned in the letter, it helps him realize that the person who sent this letter is not some mystery man, but rather a real live person with a real live web site that he can check out whenever he wants.



Quick Tip: Follow "The 90/10 Rule".

In my sales letter, which contains about 650 words, I spend only 49 words talking about me. That's it! This means that roughly 7% of the letter is about me and the other 93% is about the offer and the reader.

So this conforms to my "90/10 Rule" which states that your letter should focus at least 90% on the offer and the reader and no more than 10% on you.

The next paragraph contains just three sentences, each one absolutely crucial. The first says:

If we marketers have a universal motto, it is these three words: "**Know your audience.**"

I say "we marketers" because by now I've identified who I am, and I've earned the right to claim that I have something in common with the reader.

In essence, these words say "*I'm not an outsider trying to sell you something, I'm a marketing professional just like you.*"

By this point in the letter, I want the reader to feel some sort of connection with me, because if he relates to me on some level, he's more likely to order the report.

The sentence "Know your audience." is bolded because it captures the essential benefit of ordering the report, and because it almost sounds like a command to the reader, doesn't it?

Isn't it dangerous to give the reader a *command*? Well, yes and no. It all depends when in the letter you give your command.

By this point, late in the letter, I've *earned* the right to be a bit authoritative and assertive because I've spent the entire letter working hard to establish credibility and position myself as an expert. So here I'm giving myself permission to get a little direct and I *tell* the reader "Know your audience."

In contrast, imagine if I had *started* the letter off with the command. "Know your audience." What a disastrous start that would have been! How brazen! I would have been dismissed as a pushy, abrasive, arrogant jerk!

And yet, when used much later in the letter, *after* I've earned the right to use them, those same three words suddenly work to my advantage, elevating me to a position of authority. Timing is everything.

The second sentence in this paragraph maintains the confident tone:

You'll know your audience even better when you read this report.

And then:

Requesting your FREE copy is easy!

"Easy" is the last word in this sentence because I want the word "easy" to be hanging in the reader's mind when he starts reading the next paragraph, which contains instructions for requesting the report.:

Visit **www.petesavage.com/lookgood**. Call **1-866-785-7855**. Fax page one of this letter to me at **519-964-3211**. Or cut off the order slip on page one and mail it to me in the window envelope.

Simple, straightforward instructions with no unnecessary words. I list the easiest methods of ordering first (i.e. visit the URL or call the toll-free phone number).

I then say fax page one of this letter "to me" because it's a nice way to remind the reader that this letter comes from a real live person. I take advantage of the fact that, as an independent freelancer, I can add little personal touches like this into a sales letter and it sounds completely natural and genuine.

The last sentence in that paragraph is very specific. I don't say "Or use the order slip" and leave it at that. I say "Or cut off the order slip on

page one and mail it to me in the window envelope.” It’s important to be very explicit when giving instructions in a call to action.

Now then, maybe after reading these ordering instructions, the reader isn’t quite sure which ordering method he’s going to use, so his mind starts to drift, and he thinks about going to grab a coffee first . Or quickly checking his email. Or doing one of the hundred other important things that are waiting for him. No! We can’t have that! So we quickly snap him out of his daydream with this little gentle little command:

Request your FREE copy right now.

Come on! Let’s go! Do it right now! And if that’s not enough to get them moving, I give them just one final push:

You’ll be glad you did.

That last little sentence is powerful, because it ends the letter with a promise. I’m giving the reader my word. He *will* be glad he did. It’s also quite conversational, so it finishes the letter off on a pleasant note. (And, did you notice... I snuck in two instances the word “you”.)

The Logo

My logo is intentionally placed at the bottom of page two. Now, everyone has a soft spot for their own logo and I’m no different, but, in direct mail, branding takes a back seat to the primary goal: generating response.

I didn’t want my logo splashed across the top of page one, letterhead style, because I want the reader to see one thing and one thing only – the headline!

And my logo plays *no* part in the reader’s decision to order the report, so I don’t want it anywhere near the order form on page one.

So that leaves page two. But I can’t have it floating around at the top of page two, because there’s some important stuff up there in those subheads and checkmarks that I want the reader to see without being distracted.

So the only spot left for my logo to go is at the end of the letter, which also happens to be the most logical place for it to go, because it's right beside my name and signature.

Perfect.

The Sign Off and The Signature

Sincerely,

Pete Savage

For the sign off, I went with "Sincerely". Personal preference. I've always liked it. "Yours truly" sounds too warm and fuzzy for me, and "Best Regards" is a bit too stuffy. "Sincerely" is right in the middle.

I signed each letter by hand, because I mailed out a manageable amount of letters. But if you're doing a mail out of several hundred letters, you'll save a lot of time going with a digital image of your signature.

Incidentally, I signed "Pete" instead of "Pete Savage" to keep the personal and human feel (and to save time!).

An important piece of advice: make sure your signature *looks* right. It should match the *image* you're trying to project. If you're trying to come across as confident and authoritative, your signature has to be confident and authoritative – not so soft and cuddly that you just want to reach out and pinch it.

The P.S.

Some readers, before reading the letter, will flip to the end of the last page to look at the signature and see who it came from. While there, many will read the P.S. because P.S. messages are typically quite short. So, take advantage of this by writing a powerful P.S.:

P.S. Decision makers in your target market have told us what gets their attention.

Find out how to best influence their purchase decisions, and get the surprising results of my industry survey of 500 web sites (including yours). It's all in the FREE report available for you right now at www.petesavage.com/lookgood.

After the headline, I spent the longest amount of time working on that bolded “P.S.” line that looks like a subhead.

I wanted it to be compelling, and just mysterious enough to get the curiosity centers of the reader’s mind all riled up, so that he’d read the text beneath, which is all about the offer and the call to action.

Rather than explain all four methods for ordering the report, I chose to keep it simple and mention just one, the easiest response mechanism for the reader – the URL.

Please flip back to page one of the sales letter for just a minute so we can talk about...

The Order Form

You should write and lay out the “Order Form” as though it were a mini print ad for your report because, essentially, that’s what it is!

Yes, it is a mechanism by which the reader can order the report (either by faxing the page back, or cutting the form off and mailing it in – as explained in the bullets at the bottom of the order form). But it’s also a great way to catch the eye of skimmers, who may in fact be interested in what your report has to say, but may not have time, or be in the mood, to read your entire sales letter.

Visual Image

So since this is a little advertisement, the visual is very important. If you’ve ever ordered something from a catalog, or online, I’ll bet you looked long and hard at the *picture* of the product before you ordered.

Would you order products from a catalogue or web site if there were no pictures? Probably not. Same idea here. I show the reader a nice, big, colour, professional looking report cover so he can see what he’s ordering. (Yes, it’s just the front cover, but it makes a difference.)

Title

And, again, you can see why it’s important that the title alone is descriptive enough of the report that it actually does a good job of selling.

The “Form”

Nobody likes to fill out forms so I purposely designed this order form to give the reader the least amount of work possible. I ask only for one thing – their email address.

Thanks to the mail merge feature in Microsoft Word, the full contact information of each recipient is already printed in the top left of the form. It’s located there so that it appears in the window of the return envelope, should the recipient decide to mail this order form to me. (For more on this, see “Return Envelope Intricacies” in Chapter 11).

Asking for Email Address

The sentence “We respect your privacy.” under the line where I ask for email is very important to help alleviate anxiety that someone may feel over giving out their email address. The sentence “Report will be emailed (PDF).” is there because it’s explains *why* I’m asking for the email address.

Clear Instructions

Just below the area where I ask for email, I have four bullets with explicit instructions on how to order the report.

Chapter 5

10-Step Formula for Writing a Winning Sales Letter

Now that we've gone through the letter in detail, let's pull back, and look at it in a different light, so you can see exactly how it conforms to the 10-step sales letter formula that I present for you here:

- Step 1. Get Attention
- Step 2. Earn Interest
- Step 3. Present The Problem
- Step 4. Illuminate The Problem
- Step 5. Introduce Your Offer
- Step 6. Illuminate Your Offer
- Step 7. Introduce Yourself
- Step 8. Repeat The Offer
- Step 9. Call To Action
- Step 10. P.S. Repeat The Offer Again!

The next few pages explain each of the 10 steps in detail. As you read them, you might wish to refer to my sales letter again and identify the specific words and sentences I use as I follow the 10-step formula. If you take the time to do this, you'll find it easy to follow the formula when you sit down to write your own sales letter!

Step 1. Get Attention

Your headline must grab the attention of the reader. Period. If it fails to snap your reader to attention, your whole package goes in the trash. So expect to spend a lot of time writing, rewriting, tweaking and generally playing with your headline until it's as good as it can possibly be.

This doesn't mean you must have your headline perfected before you write the sales letter. On the contrary, you might come back to your headline many times to make changes as your sales letter comes together.

Step 2. Earn Interest

Ok, you've got the reader's attention with you headline and he's decided to start reading your letter – but this is no guarantee that your letter will be read! You must *earn* the reader's interest right in the opening sentence. And you do this by making it immediately obvious that this letter is *relevant* to him.

There are many ways to do this. Begin to tell a story, mention a famous quote, ask a question, and on and on. Just keep in mind that your opening sentence must really connect with the reader, by making that little voice in their head say “*Yeah, this is exactly how I feel.*”

Step 3. Present The Problem

If clients didn't have any problems, there would be no need to hire outside resources like freelancers, right? But just because they *have* problems doesn't mean the one you're honing in on is always centre stage in your reader's mind. So your job is to get inside the reader's head and *drag* it out there!

Step 4. Illuminate The Problem

Now, you don't just mention the problem once and run for the hills. No way! Once you've dragged the problem out on centre stage, you then shine a spotlight on it, and force your reader to stare at it for a while, so that his anxiety builds a little.

How do you do this? Just spend a few sentences talking about the impact and the consequences of not solving the problem, and the reader's anxiety will grow.

Step 5. Introduce Your Offer

With the reader's anxiety on the rise, perhaps even piqued, now is the time to *introduce your offer as the solution* to the problem you just illuminated.

Critical point: At this point in the letter, you are introducing your *offer*, not yourself, not your business, not your copywriting services. What should your offer be? I recommend a free report. For more on free reports, see the bonus article (Bonus #1) at the end of this book.

When you're writing your first draft of your sales letter, you'll probably feel compelled to introduce yourself much earlier in the letter! I know I felt that way. Somehow it just didn't feel right not telling the reader who I was up front.

But the truth is, the reader doesn't care who you are as much as he cares that you can solve his problem, so the solution to their problem (i.e. your offer) comes first. And rest assured you get to introduce yourself soon.

Step 6. Illuminate Your Offer

When you illuminate your offer, you're giving the reader a *glimpse* into your offer.

When I write this part of my sales letter, I like to mentally picture my offer as a treasure chest, and here's where you get to crack open the lid on the chest – just an inch or so – so that the reader can see be dazzled by the blinding glow that escapes!

So you illuminate your offer by providing *just enough* specifics about it to entice your reader want to see more.

Step 7. Introduce Yourself

Now, at long last, you can tell the reader who you are. But be brief! (Remember the 90/10 rule from the previous chapter).

Mention your name, what you do and a little something about yourself to communicate your credibility. You might mention one of these things:

- Your number of years experience (Not necessarily as a writer, but in the industry? Or in the business world?)
- Name drop one, two, or three impressive clients – impressive either because they are well known generally, well known to the reader, or relevant to the reader in some other way.
- Or get creative and include a testimonial. i.e. *Sandy Beach, Marketing Manager at She-Sells-Sea-Shells calls my writing "On time, on-budget, and on-target!"*

Step 8. Repeat The Offer

After briefly mentioning yourself, you need to quickly bring the attention back to the offer. That's because you're getting close to the end of the letter, so you'll soon be giving the reader a call to action.



Quick Tip: A great way to move the attention from you back to your offer is to say “You can read more about me on my web site at www.URL.com but for now, order my FREE report...”

And now that the reader is refocused on the offer, you can tell him how to take you up on it.

Step 9. Call To Action

Here is where you plainly spell out exactly what you want the reader to do and HOW to do it. List all the methods by which he can contact you. List the URL first because it’s the easiest ordering method, for both the reader and *you*. (i.e. No calls to field or faxes to collect).



Quick Tip: In your call to action, don’t be afraid to tell your reader what to do using an authoritative tone. By now you’ve built up a little credibility and established some authority so now is not the time to undo all of your momentum by saying, “*If* you’d like to see this report, feel free to request it...”. Instead, take a more authoritative tone and say “Request your free report right now.”

You can find great examples of an authoritative tone on bottles of prescription medication! The stickers on those bottles say things like: “Take one tablet twice daily” or “Take this medication on a full stomach” or “Finish this medication.” But nowhere will you find a sticker that says, “If you’d like to take a tablet or two over the next few weeks, that would be great! Please feel free to do so at your convenience.”

10. P.S. Repeat The Offer Again!

Time and again, studies show that the P.S. on sales letters get read. We humans seem to love them. So use that little gem of knowledge about human nature to your advantage by strongly promoting your offer in the P.S.

Chapter 6

The “Bulky Item”

Now let’s look at the other components of my direct mail package, starting with the bulky item.

A bulky item is exactly what it sounds like. It’s a small item you include in your direct mail package, to make the envelope look and feel “bulky”.

Putting an object inside an envelope suddenly transforms the envelope into a “package.” And when a package arrives with your name on it, what do you do? You open it!

So, the single most important reason to include a bulky item in your mailer is to *get the package opened*.

But, you can’t just pick any old thing to stuff into the envelope. Once the envelope is opened, your bulky item and your sales letter must work together to make an impact on the reader, so you have to put a lot of thought into what the *theme* of your package is going to be.

Getting Ideas for Your Bulky Item

When brainstorming about my direct mail package, it was the bulky item that I thought of *first*, and my idea for the theme of the sales letter developed from that.

Where did I get the idea for the shoe polisher? I visited a web site that sold corporate promotional items. You know, mugs, key chains and the like.

The site I visited was <http://www.impactpromotions.com/> and there are hundreds more like them out there.

You’ll be amazed at the range of products you’ll see on these sites – many very affordable for home-based consultants like you and me.

I actually found it to be great fun to surf around the site looking at lots of different promotional items, and it wasn’t long before the ideas started flooding in.

I came up with several ideas, and I'll share the best contenders with you in just a minute (maybe one of them will be perfect for you!)

After considerable thought, I eventually settled on the decision that my bulky item would be a small, plastic shoe polisher:



This is a pocket-sized shoe polisher, about the circumference of your palm, with a twist-off lid as shown. (Exact dimensions with the lid screwed on: 2¹/₄" x 5⁵/₈")

How did I know this shoe polisher would translate into a great 'theme' for the letter? Because I put it to the test by asking myself, *Can I easily come up with some headlines or snippets of letter copy that incorporate this theme?*

After thinking about this for a bit, it wasn't long before the "looking good" theme came to mind, and I quickly roughed out some general ideas for the headline of the sales letter.

The headline you see on the final version of the letter didn't just fall into place by the way. I began with a general *idea* of what I wanted the headline to say, and then I began writing a draft of the sales letter.

While writing the sales letter, I came back to the headline many times and made it stronger and stronger.

To Brand or Not To Brand

I ordered 500 shoe polishers at a cost of \$1.50 each. Often, at the 500 quantity, you get a discount on the unit price.

For an extra charge (about \$50) I could print on the lid of the shoe polisher. I decided it was worth it, and had “B2B Copywriter - Pete Savage.com” imprinted on the shoe polisher.

Printing happened to be an option on the bulky item I picked. It's not *essential* but it's a good idea if it's possible (and affordable) to print your name and URL on your bulky item. The reason, or course, is if your bulky item is something useful (something the reader will hang on to for a while) he'll see your name and URL each time he goes to use it.

That's not to say you can't have a great theme without a branded bulky item. I once heard of a direct mail campaign where the bulky item was a plain old rock (yes, a rock!) with a headline something like “Help is just a stone's throw away”.

So What's Your Theme Going to Be?

Maybe you already have an idea or two for a theme for your letter. If so, that's great! But if you don't, that's also great because that means you have a blank canvas from which to start brainstorming!

There are *millions* of ideas out there for themes, and there are ten great ones to get you started on the next page. Some of them I thought long and hard about, and I still might try them some day, but for now I'm sticking with the shoe polisher.

If you decide to go with any of those ideas, let me know how they work!

Ten GREAT Ideas for Bulky Item

Here are ten great ideas for a bulky item, that might help you come up with your theme.

To get your creative juices flowing, jot down some possible headlines for the sales letter for each bulky item.

Bulky Item Ideas	Possible Headlines
Specialty tea bag	
Mini tape measure	
Mini yo-yo	
Toy maraca	
Pack of Smarties®	
Sticky note pad	

Castanets	
Keychain	
Coins	
Cinnamon sticks	

Not every item above will jive with your particular target audience, but don't worry. This exercise is just to get your wheels in motion when you're ready to brainstorm ideas.

Add to this list with your own idea of bulky items. (Remember the tip about visiting a promotional marketing web site for some good visuals.) Think about your target audience. What are their likes and dislikes? What can you come up with that they would find interesting?

Brainstorming and developing ideas can be a lot of fun. And why not invite your friends, spouse, partner, or kids to brainstorm ideas with you?

Note: Before buying your bulky item, you must check with your country's postal service for restrictions as to what can and can't be sent in the mail.

Chapter 7

The Outer Envelope

I used a plain bubble-lined Kraft envelope to carry the contents of my direct mail package. Here's what the 6" x 9" envelope looked like (this is a shot of the back of the envelope, flap open, showing you the self-sealing strip):



Here's a little secret between you and me... this bubble-lined envelope was actually my *second* choice of envelopes to use. My original plan was to go with a standard plain white #10 envelope. I bought a bunch of plain white envelopes and addressed them all myself, by running them through my printer. I even printed a nice, elegant looking return address (complete with my logo) on each envelope.

But, I was forced into coming up with a "Plan B" after I mailed a test package that went *horribly* wrong!

The Delivery Test: Take 1

So, there I was, with all my letters carefully folded and inserted plain white envelopes, shoe polishers were all tucked inside, and each was sealed and ready to go.

Just before I mailed the whole batch, I pulled out *the test package*, which was the same as all the others, but addressed to a friend of mine.

I drove over to a postal outlet, and showed them the envelope. The attendant pulled out a plastic template which looked like a cutting board with a little slot cut out of it. She pushed the envelope through the slot, and it slipped through no problem.

This was good because if it had been too thick to go through, this would have been deemed a “package” by their standards and subject to much higher postage.



Quick Tip: I had visited this postal outlet several weeks earlier, before I had even ordered the shoe polishers, to discuss my mailing and to describe the bulky item I was planning to use. I recommend you do the same, once you decide on what your bulky item will be.

It can be tough for them to give you a definite answer on postage costs unless you have a sample of the physical item you wish to mail; however, from that first conversation, I discerned that the shoe polishers would probably be alright, so I went ahead with my plans, and ordered the shoe polishers.

So, my test package went into the mail, and I went home, confident that it would arrive with no problems.

Several days later, my friend received the test package – and it was completely demolished! Whatever mail processing machines this envelope went through from point A to point B, they sure did a number on that heavy duty envelope!

The envelope arrived in terrible condition. It was crumpled and one corner was severely ripped. Inside, there was a ruffled letter, a bent

return envelope, and the splintered remains of my precious shoe polisher!

In fact, it was in such a tattered state that my friend took a photograph of it to show me! The shoe polisher looked as though it had been put through a blender.

For a second, my heart sank. Suddenly there was *no way* I could do this mailing using all those envelopes that I had carefully printed. (Why I printed them all *before* I sent the first test package, is beyond me! I guess I just assumed they would arrive safely).

However, I quickly felt an enormous sense of relief. *Thank GOODNESS* I had actually done a test mailing before sending all the packages out.

Plan B

So... it was time for Plan B. I hopped in my car, drove to a local office supply store, and roamed the envelope aisle looking for a bubble envelope that would suit my needs.

I soon found the 6" x 9" Kraft envelope with bubble lining. It cost \$4.96 for a 12-pack, which is about \$0.41 per envelope.

So now that I was going to be using bubbled envelopes, I needed labels.

Mailing Labels

Just a little further down the envelope aisle, I sized up the available labels and selected these two...

For the mailing address: Avery® 5162™ /8162™ (4" x 1^{1/3}")

For my return address: Avery® 5160™ /8160™ (2^{5/8}" x 1")

Actually, I didn't buy the Avery® name brand labels. I bought the less expensive store-brand version that says "same size as Avery®..." and lists the exact Avery® code number right on the package. Saved a few bucks, and they worked just fine.

Here's what the front of the envelope looks like with the labels affixed:



The Delivery Test: Take 2

This time around, using my new bubble-lined envelopes, I put together four complete packages and again set off to the post office.

I presented my four packages to the attendant and out came the little plastic cutting board thing again. All four went through – just *barely* mind you, because these bubble-lined envelopes are much thicker!

Again I left the post office, this time wondering what would become of the packages. A few days later, I was delighted when three of my friends reported that the packages had arrived in fine condition, the contents safe and sound.

(I was delighted, but not too surprised, because after the letdown of the first delivery test, I conducted my own “durability test” with the bubble-lined envelope. I stuck a shoe polisher into one of the envelopes, dropped it on the ground and stood on it! Sure enough, the bubble liner held up.)

The fourth package also arrived safe and sound, although it took about 10 days to reach its destination. Just goes to show you that there are

inconsistencies in the delivery of regular (meaning non-courier) mail that you have no control over. Ah well. Whaddya gonna do?

With all four test packages arriving safe and sound, I was ready to print the rest of the labels, assemble all the packages, and take them to the post office to be mailed.

Printing the Labels

Return address labels – Microsoft Word allows you to specify the Avery® number of the labels you are working with, and you simply enter your address and select your label number.

Here's how I did it using Microsoft Word (Microsoft Office 2003). In Word, from the toolbar menu, select *Tools > Letters and Mailings > Envelopes and Labels* (then click the “Labels” tab) and simply enter your return address.

After you've entered your return address, right click it and select “Font” from the dropdown menu. Go with a sans-serif font like Arial. 8pt or 9 pt, which should print cleanly and look professional.

To select the appropriate Avery® label number, click the “Options” button.

Addressee labels – For these labels, you'll be running a mail merge. Again, this was pretty easy using Microsoft Word (Microsoft Office 2003). To get started, select *Tools > Letters and Mailings > Mail Merge* and then follow the instructions.

For me, this was the first time I'd ever run a mail merge, so there was a bit of a learning curve. I wasted a couple label sheets figuring it out, and then I was off and running. No big deal.



Quick Tip: Make sure your printer options are selected to the highest possible quality setting when printing your labels.

The Bubble-Lined Envelope and The Curiosity Factor

Thank goodness that very first envelope I mailed *failed* the first deliverability test so severely, because it led me toward an even better envelope selection, with an even higher curiosity factor.

Have another look at the picture of the outer envelope on page 45. Now, put yourself in your target audience member's shoes for a second. If you're sitting there at work, and this puffy little package addressed to you arrived amongst a pile of mail, wouldn't you be curious as to what's inside?

You're telling me! The curiosity factor is off the charts! Now I have no way of knowing exactly how many people opened the envelope, but there is no doubt in my mind that the intriguing package piqued the recipients' curiosity and contributed to a high open rate.



Quick Tip: It's a great idea to use good old stamps on your outer envelope as opposed to mechanically-generated postage labels that may be available to you.

Stamps on an envelope look far more personal and, therefore, make it even more irresistible for the recipient to open the package.

Chapter 8

The Return Envelope

This is the most straightforward part of the direct mail package to prepare.

I bought a package of white “#9 Statement Double Window Security Envelopes”. Cost was \$30.76 for 500, or about \$0.06 each.

They’re a little smaller than #10 envelopes and any office supply store will carry them. Here’s what they look like:



It’s important to get *security* envelopes, which have a printed pattern on the inside so that you can’t see the contents through the wall of the envelope. Since you’re asking the recipient to send you their personal information through the mail, you don’t want this info to be readable through the envelope.

Do you really need a return envelope?

If you’re giving your reader the option to respond by fax, phone, and URL, do you really need to include a return envelope? It’s your call. I’ve only ever received one response via a return envelope, and for this reason I’m thinking of dropping it from my future mailings.

My target audience happens to be extremely Internet- savvy, but perhaps *your* target audience would be more apt to respond via regular mail. Think this over, and if you’re not sure, it doesn’t hurt to include

the return envelope. You can always eliminate it if you discover it's not getting used.

Try This Bonus Optional Technique

Here's a bonus technique I learned about but didn't have time to implement. Buy a self-inking stamp from your office supply store that says "Rush" or "Urgent" or "Priority" and stamp this right onto the front of your return envelopes.

This is a decades-old direct mail technique designed to give the reader the feeling that their form will be seen to in a hurry. I've never done this though, so I can't personally attest to how effective it might be.

It's not expensive if you'd like to try doing this. The office supply store I go to sells a self-inking "Urgent" stamp for less than \$10.

Again, if you're going to do this, take a sample envelope into your local post office. Get their confirmation as to exactly where on the envelope the "Urgent" stamp can and can't be located.

Chapter 9

Cost Breakdown

This section shows you what it costs to put the whole package together, so you can get a good idea of the type of investment you'll need to make to create a similar package.

Costs shown here are retail prices, before taxes, and in Canadian dollars, which are roughly equivalent to U.S dollars at time of publication of this book.

Item:	Cost:
Weyerhaeuser First Choice® Premium Ink Jet Paper (98 Brightness, 24lb Heavyweight)	\$11.94 for one package (500 sheets)
Kraft 6" x 9" Bubble-Lined Envelopes (9 packs of 12 envelopes @ \$4.96 per pack)	\$44.64 for 108 envelopes
#9 Statement Double Window Security Envelopes	\$30.76 for 500 envelopes
Labels Avery® size 5162™ /8162™ and Avery® size 5160™ /8160™	\$14.96 for 350 labels \$14.96 for 750 labels
Printer Ink Colour HP Inkjet Cartridges (Cyan, Magenta & Yellow @ \$30.64 each) Black HP Inkjet Cartridge	\$ 91.92 \$ 45.70
Postage (\$1.15 per envelope; Canada Post rates)	\$ 115 (rounded up to 100 envelopes)
Shoe Polishers (\$1.50 ea for 500, plus \$50 imprint fee)	\$ 800 for 500
Folding Bone	\$9.00

So, all told that adds up to a total cost of about \$1,179. But considering I over-bought on many of the supplies (like return envelopes and shoe polishers) the cost per 100 packages is closer to \$ 481. Cost per package, therefore is \$4.81.

Note that these costs include higher-than-standard postage costs (due to the bubble-envelope and include a cost allocation for pretty much everything that went into the package... right down to printer ink!)

Other Related Costs:

* Before I did this direct mail piece, I didn't have a colour printer, so I bought an HP OfficeJet K550 on sale for \$199. It did a spectacular job.

* Once your report is written, you might wish to have a freelance designer lay out your report for you. The designer I used spent a few hours doing so, for which I paid about \$200.



Quick Tip: You'll likely save money if you have the same graphic designer do all of your design work.

If you don't know any designers, you might try finding one at Elance.com. However, I would strongly advise that you invest some time and effort into building up a relationship with a great freelance graphic designer. Start asking friends and neighbours if they know anyone who does freelance design and I bet you'll find someone before too long.

You can trade services with one another for free, or at a discount, and you might even establish a great business relationship that leads to some copywriting work coming your way!

Note: It's important that your designer understand the principles of direct response, so that their design helps rather than hinders your copywriting.

Chapter 10

More Advice for Writing Your Sales Letter

Answers to Common Questions

Does it matter what font you use?

Yes it does. For a printed sales letter, use an appealing 'serif' font that is easy to read. Experiment with a few different fonts. Feel free to stray from Times New Roman, but don't get so creative that the text becomes hard to read.

Most people who sit in front of computers are straining to read all day. For goodness sake give them a break when they see your letter, by using an easy-to-read font.

Here's a tip that can make all the difference in the world. In MS Word, change the colour of your font from Black to Gray-80% instead. Somehow this subtle change is not quite as stark as 100% Black on a white page, and makes the letter look a little more professional.

Can you put this together without the help of a graphic designer?

You certainly can. I did 95% of the work without any help from a graphic designer, however, in my opinion, my sales letter was elevated a notch after I sent it over to a graphic designer friend of mine for her input. (The same graphic designer who designed my web site).

She took a quick look and made some font and colour recommendations I never would have thought of, which really made the letter look a lot more elegant, then I went and made these changes on my own.

Do you need to use images in your sales letter?

There's only one image on my sales letter, and that's the cover of the actual report.

That report cover was designed by my graphic designer friend when she built me web site, so I simply had her send me the image of the report cover, and I stuck it into a 'Text Box' in Microsoft Word, which let me move it anywhere within my document.

Tell whoever designs your web site that you want to do the same. Alternatively, you can create your own mock report cover for your letter by playing around with the 'Text Box' or 'Word Art' tools in Microsoft Word.

Your report cover page doesn't have to be as fancy as mine, but it does have to look professional.

Is it okay to have a two-page sales letter? Shouldn't you aim for a one-pager?

When you sit down to write your draft, and if you follow the 10-step process I recommend, you'll be hard pressed to squeeze everything onto one page. Yes, people today are more time pressed than ever before, but if they are interested in what you have to say, they'll read a two-page letter.

Do you have to have a web site for this direct mail campaign to be successful?

In my opinion, yes. If you've established a professional image, and you're looking for a business relationship, you're at a serious disadvantage if you don't have a web site.

Remember that little voice in your prospect's head? Here's what it will be saying if you don't have a web site:

"Why doesn't he/she have a web site?"

And that nagging little question may be enough of a roadblock in your prospect's mind to prevent him or her from doing business with you.

Here's what other freelance pros say about the need for a web site:

Bob Bly: "The idea is to drive traffic to your site – and then get them to sign up for either your free report or your free e-zine."

- From *Creating a Web Site for Your Consulting Business*

Steve Slaunwhite: “We live in the world of digital business, and clients are using the Internet more than ever to deal with vendors and manage projects. Today, you’re not part of the action if you don’t have a web site.”

- From *Start & Run A Copywriting Business (First Edition)*

Peter Bowerman: “For both the initial and ongoing prospecting and business building parts of your enterprise, few tools are as expeditious as a web site.”

- From *The Well Fed Writer™: Back for Seconds*

Chris Marlow: “A hard-driving, well-branded web site will pre-sell you so you don't have to waste time selling yourself. This allows you to get right to the point on the first call with a new client, and close the job in record time.”

5 Great Sales Letter Tips

Follow these tried and true techniques when writing your own your direct mail sales letter:

1. Indent at the beginning of each paragraph. It’s easier on the eye.
2. Split the two-page letter strategically. Either split it in the middle of a sentence, or in the middle of a bulleted list.
3. Use the words “(Continue)” or “(Over please)” in parenthesis at the end of page one. (Confession: I didn’t use this technique because I ran out of space at the end of my page one, and to redesign it would have taken more time than I had left to spare. Although it didn’t seem to hurt my results, this is probably a technique I would consider using if I ever redesign my sales letter.)
4. Put an image, representing your offer, somewhere on page one of your letter.
5. Make it easy. Fill out information for your reader. If you have a mail-back or fax-back order form, include the reader’s name, title and mailing address on the form, so that all he has to add is his email address.

Chapter 11

Tips on Production & Assembly

Here are a few tips for handling some of those little intricacies you'll run into when putting your package together.

Paper Folding Tips

Folding the pages is easy. If you're using a 6"x9" envelope like I did, you can simply fold the page in half. For smaller envelopes, like standard #10 envelopes, direct mail is usually folded in a "Z-fold" (also known as an accordion fold) meaning that the folded letter makes the shape of a "Z", like this:



Make sure the face of your letter faces out, so you can see the headline when the letter is folded. Print a few test letters, find the right spot for your fold line(s), and then fold every letter exactly the same way.

Obviously, try to get your fold in that little white space above or below a sentence (or in between paragraphs) so that you're not folding right through the words on the page, which will make that line harder to read when the letter is unfolded.

Get a Bone Folder!

Don't use your fingers to create the fold in your letters. You'll never get a sharp crease, especially if you're using heavier paper, and you might smear the ink if you used an inkjet printer.

Instead, get yourself a bone folder. It's a smooth, thin stick (originally made from bone, but now commonly made from plastic) that you use to create a nice sharp crease when you're folding your letters. This will make a world of difference in terms of how professional your letter looks.

You can find bone folders at arts and craft stores, for under \$10. Here's what one looks like:



If you can't get your hands on a bone folder, grab a small kitchen utensil with a smooth plastic handle and try that out on some test letters.

Return Envelope Intricacies

If you're using a return windowed envelope like the one I used, you need to pay close attention to your order form area – the part of your letter that your prospect will be cutting off and mailing back to you.

You must make sure that both addresses (yours and the sender's) will appear in the windowed envelope. I found the only way to do this was through trial and error. I kept positioning and repositioning the locations of the addresses, printing test sheets, sticking them in the windowed envelope, seeing how it looked, and trying again!

It didn't take me all day, but it was a rather painstaking task to be honest.

Stuffing

Get your friends or family to help you and you'll be done in no time. The weekend before I was set to mail, my in-laws came to town for a visit. Perfect timing!

It was a touching scene that Saturday afternoon... my wife, her mom and dad and I, all gathered around the dining room table folding letters and stuffing envelopes.

Set up your envelopes, labels, letters, and bulky items in an assembly line fashion and you'll be done in no time. We finished in just a couple hours.



Quick Tip: Give one person the job of “Quality Control” which means that when each assembled package rolls off your assembly line waiting to be sealed, it’s his or her job to peek inside the envelope, and ensure that the “Name” in “Dear Name,” matches the “Name” on the outside label. Then the envelopes get sealed.

Chapter 12

The Landing Page

The URL

The URL goes directly to a “form” on my web site where the reader can enter his information and order the report.

When this mailing went out, here is what the recipient saw when he visited www.petesavage.com/lookgood at the time of this mailing:

PETE SAVAGE
B2B COPYWRITER
* Specializing in software and technology

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1-866-785-7855
Pete Savage, B2B Copywriter
email: pete@petesavage.com

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First Name*
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"Great issue today. I'm glad I subscribed to your e-newsletter!"
Robert W. Bly, author of
The Complete Idiot's Guide to Direct Marketing

Contact Pete

Complete and send this form to request your free copy of my report, **The Web's Most Powerful Tool for Influencing Technology Buyers... And The Big Mistake 9 out of 10 Marketing Directors Make When They Try To Use It.** *Required field

Name*
Email*
Non-business email addresses (e.g. Yahoo, Hotmail, etc.) are not accepted.
Title*
Web Site*
Company
Phone Number
Address
City
State/Province Zip/Postal
Country
Any questions or comments?

☐ **FREE SUBSCRIPTION**
Please sign me up for your e-newsletter, *The Tech Marketer's Lift Letter* which comes with an instant download of your FREE article *From Weak to Wonderful: 9 Ways to Maximize the Power of Your Case Studies*.

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When a reader takes the trouble to enter the entire URL as “www.petesavage.com/lookgood” you can bet that he is very interested in ordering, so this page contains a very straightforward form which allows him to do just that.

When entering the URL, however, many people will get lazy and stop right after the “.com” because they know this will at least take them *somewhere*.

This means that many of the people who read my letter would land on www.petesavage.com and not www.petesavage.com/lookgood. For this reason, it’s important that your *home page* also does a good job of selling the offer of the report.

The next page shows you a picture of what my home page looked like at the time of this mailing.

PETE SAVAGE

B2B COPYWRITER*

* Specializing in software and technology

FREE Subscription:
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"Great issue today, I'm glad I subscribed to your e-newsletter!"

Robert W. Bly, author of *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Direct Marketing*

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Here's a glimpse of what's inside:

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- A simple tip sheet on how to quickly and easily put this tool to work
- The surprise finding from my survey of 500 software and technology web sites, revealing what 9 out of 10 tech marketers aren't doing online – but should be!
- A cost comparison of the top 5 tactics for influencing tech buyers
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MEET PETE SAVAGE
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My name is Pete Savage and you can see the work I've done for major technology players like **Motorola**, **Allstream**, **NCR** and others on my [Samples](#) page.

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Notice the look and feel of the landing page and the home page are very similar to that of the letter. There's consistency in the use of copy, colours, branding, and even font types. This is a must, because it helps to create a sense of familiarity for the reader.

After reading your sales letter, it's only natural for the reader to expect a similar look and feel on your web site. Any dissimilarity will be distracting and will cause confusion -- two things which may prevent him from taking any further action on your site.
