

HOW TO RESPOND TO REQUESTS FOR FREE INFORMATION

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HOW TO RESPOND TO REQUESTS FOR FREE INFORMATION

Here's a common dilemma: You receive a letter enclosed with a copy of your ad that specifically states "...for more information, send \$1." However, they DON'T enclose the \$1.

One respondent was brave enough to include a cover letter that stated he was enclosing \$1 for more information, but conveniently "forgot" to put it in the envelope. Is this really an unintentional mistake? Did the person really forget to send the money? Probably not. Why do I make that assumption? Because the frequency of them are too numerous to count. If it was just "human error" the same tactics wouldn't be used by 90% of them. (I did have one clever gal though purposely seal and re-open part of the envelope to make it appear like the money had dropped out. It was obvious the envelope had not got caught in machinery because I used to work for the post office and know how the mail is processed.)

Unfortunately the poor mail order dealer who is trying to run an honest business will go ahead, take the financial loss and fill this order. They rest on the "hope" that this person will place a large order in the near future once they receive their information; which will make up for the \$1 he/she conveniently forgot to enclose in the beginning.

But there is a way to combat this problem. Here's what you do: Instead of filling the order for more information, write a short letter on your business stationary.

Thank the customer for inquiring about your product and graciously inform him or her that the letter was received without proper payment. but send the information anyway. Do not sacrifice 29 Cents for an 18% conversion. In the long run, after you've written and mailed the letter, it is better that you send the free (\$1) information anyway.

Also, enclose 1 or 2 ads in with your letter. This way, it only costs you 29c to respond to their request and you don't lose money on someone who is only after a "free ride."

Believe it or not, there are actually some people who just enjoy receiving mail. They never place an order or spend any money. They just enjoy receiving mail. And some people actually spend time just to see what they can get "free." They envision mail order companies as huge enterprises and have a vengeance to rip them off because they are jealous and have nothing to account for in their own personal lives. I know this sounds harsh _ but there are people like this.

And on the rare occasion when a customer writes back and claims to have answered your ad and sent \$1 for information already, you simply reply:

"I'm sorry. In checking our records we find that you did, in fact, make an inquiry on (date). Unfortunately, you did not enclose the \$1 payment as stated in our ad. We understand mistakes like this can happen since most of us lead hectic daily lives and we apologize for any misunderstandings." Then _ leave it go at that. The customer will get the message. You aren't being cruel and calling them a liar. In fact, you are being rather innocent in the entire matter. The only difference is _ YOU are in control of the situation.

Somewhere there's this unwritten law that says you have to send NEW customers tons of circulars the first time they write you for more information. Not so. Customers who are worth the time and investment you make will supply you with repeat orders and you don't have to send them boxes of stuff. Instead, send just a few offers at a time. This way, it will take many mailings to get copies of all the circulars you promote and it will appear to the customer that you are adding and growing in your business.

Think about it! And for those of you who make it a habit not to send people the requested first-class stamps and postage money to offset the cost to send you the information you are requesting _ watch out! Most of us are people just like you are. We work hard and cannot afford being nickel-and-dimed to death either!