

THE DO'S AND DON'T'S OF PROFITABLE MAIL ORDER ADS

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Regardless of how you look at it, the most important aspect of any successful mail order business is its advertising. In fact, mail order success is wholly dependent, and even predicated upon good advertising.

First of all, you've got to have a dynamic, spectacular ad that attracts the eye and grabs the interest of the people you're trying to sell to. Thus, unless your ad really "jumps out" at the reader, your sales won't live up to expectations, and your ad money will be wasted.

The eye-catching appeal of your ad must start with the headline. Use the head line to very quickly create a picture in the minds of the reader - a vision of all their problems being solved, and attainment of the kind of happiness they seek. If your head line fails to catch the attention of your prospect, you cannot hope to capture him with the remainder of the ad, because it will go unread! So in writing your advertisement, put yourself in the shoes of your reader. You have his attention for just a little while, so you must quickly interest him in your offer, show him how he can get what he wants, and then cause him to send immediately for your "solution" to his problems. Your copy must exude enthusiasm, excitement, and a positive attitude. Don't be afraid to use a hard-sell approach! Say what you feel and believe about your offer. And use common, "everyday," but correct English.

Even so, you can and must remember to be honest. Don't exaggerate or make claims you can't back up. Never make promises you cannot or don't expect, to keep. To do so could get you in trouble with the Federal Trade and Fair Practices people.

Stress the benefits of your product or service. Explain to your reader how owning a copy of your book (for instance), or receiving your services will make his life richer, happier, and more abundant. Don't get involved in detailing all the money you've spent developing the product or researching the information you're selling, or your credentials for offering it. Stress the "sizzle" and value of ownership.

It is important to involve the reader as often as possible through the use of the word "you." Write your copy just as if you were speaking to and attempting to sell just one person. Don't let your ad sound as a speaker at a podium addressing a huge stadium filled with people, but as if there were just one individual "listening."

And don't try to be overly clever, brilliant or humorous in your advertising. Keep your copy simple, to the point, and on target toward selling your prospect the product or service because of its benefits. In other words, keep it simple, but clear; at all costs, you don't want to confuse the reader. Just tell him exactly what he'll get for his money; the benefits he'll receive; how to go about ordering it. You don't have to get too friendly. In fact, avoid becoming "folksy," and don't use slang expressions.

In writing an ad, think of yourself as a door-to-door salesperson. You have to get the attention of the prospect quickly, interest him in the product you're selling, create a desire to enjoy its benefits, and you can then close the sale.

Copywriting, whether for a display ad, a classified ad, a sales letter or a brochure, is a learned skill. It is one that anyone can master with a bit of study, practice, and perhaps some professional guidance.

Your first move, then, is to study your competition, and recognize how they are selling their wares. Practice rewriting their ads from a different point of view or from a different sales angle. Keep a file of ads you've clipped from different publications in a file of ad writing ideas. But don't copy anyone else's work; just use the ad material of others to stimulate your own creativeness.

Some of the "known facts" about advertising - and ad writing in particular - tell us that you cannot ask for more than \$3 in a short classified type ad. Generally speaking, a \$5 item will take at least a one-inch display ad. If you're trying to sell a \$10 item, you'll need at least a quarter page - perhaps even a half page of copy - and \$15 to \$20 items require a full page. If you are selling a really big ticket item (costing \$50 or more) you'll need a four-page sales letter, a brochure, separate order coupon, and a return reply envelope.

If you're making offers via direct mail, best get into the postal system with it on a Sunday, Monday or Tuesday, to be sure it does not arrive on a Monday, the first and busiest day of the week. And again, unless you're promoting a big ticket item, the quality or color of your paper won't have any great effect on the response you'll get, but the quality of your printing definitely will, so bear this in mind when you place your printing order.

One final point to remember: The summer months when people are most apt to be away on vacation are usually not good months for direct mail. But they are good for opportunity advertisements in publications often found in vacation areas, and in motels and hotels.

Again, it cannot be stressed too much or too often: Success in mail order does, indeed, depend upon advertising - and as with anything else, quality pays off in the long run. Read this report again; study it; let it sink in. Then apply the principles outlined in it. They have worked for others, and **THEY CAN WORK FOR YOU!**