

THE SELLING SECRETS OF MILLION DOLLAR SALES LETTERS

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Regardless of what you're trying to sell, you really can't sell it without "talking" with your prospective buyer. And in attempting to sell anything by mail, the sales letter you send out is when and how you talk to your prospect.

All winning sales letters "talk" to the prospect by creating an image in the mind of the reader. They "set the scene" by appealing to a desire or need; and then they flow smoothly into the "visionary" part of the sales pitch by describing in detail how wonderful life will be and, how "good" the prospect is going to feel after he's purchased your product. This is the "body or guts" of a sales letter.

Overall, a winning sales letter follows a time-tested and proven formula: 1) Get his attention; 2) Get him interested in what you can do for him; 3) Make him desire the benefits of your product so badly his mouth begins to water; 4) Demand action from him - tell him to send for whatever it is you're selling without delay - any procrastination on his part might cause him to lose out. This is called the "AIDA" formula and it works.

Sales letters that pull in the most sales are almost always two pages with 1 1/2 spaces between lines. For really big ticket items, they'll run at least four pages - on an 11 x 17 inch sheet of paper folded in half. If your sales letter is only two pages in length, there's nothing wrong with running it on the front and back of one sheet of 8 1/2 x 11 paper. However, your sales letter should always be on letterhead paper - your letterhead printed, and including your logo and business motto if you have one.

Regardless of the length of your sales letter, it should do one thing, and that's sell, and sell hard! If you intend to close the sale, you've got to do it with your sales letter. You should never be "wishy-washy" with your sales letter and expect to close the sale with a color brochure or circular. You do the actual selling and the closing of that sale with your sales letter - any brochure or circular you send along with it will just reinforce what you say in the sales letter.

There's been a great deal of discussion in the past few years regarding just how long a sales letter should be. A lot of people are asking: will people really take the time to read a long sales letter. The answer is a simple and time-tested yes indeed! Surveys and tests over the years emphatically prove that longer sales letters pull even better than the shorter ones, so don't worry about the length of your sales letter - Just make sure that it sells your product for you!

The "inside secret" is to make your sales letter so interesting, and "visionary" with the benefits you're offering to the reader, that he can't resist reading it all the way through. You break up the "work" of reading by using short, punchy sentences, underlining important points you're trying to make, with the use of sub-headlines, indentations and even the use of a second color.

Relative to the brochures or circulars you may want to include with your sales letter to reinforce the sale - providing the materials you're enclosing are of the best quality, they will

generally reinforce the sale for you. But, if they are of poor quality, look cheap and don't complement your sales letter, then you shouldn't be using them. Another thing, it will definitely classify you as an independent home-worker if you hand-stamp your name/address on these brochures or advertising circulars.

Whenever possible, and so long as you have really good brochures to send out, have your printer run them through his press and print your name/address - even your telephone number and company logo - on them before you send them out. The thing is, you want your prospect to think of you as his supplier - the company - and not as just another mail order operator. Sure, you can get by with less expense but you'll end up with fewer orders and in the end, less profits.

Another thing that's been bandied about and discussed from every direction for years is whether to use a post office box number or your street address. Generally, it's best to include both your post office box number, AND, your street address on your sales letter. This kind of open display of your honesty will give you credibility and dispel the thought of you being just another "fly-by-night" mail order company in the mind of your prospect.

Above all else, you've got to include some sort of ordering coupon. This coupon has to be as simple and as easy for the prospect to fill out and return to you as you can possibly make it. A great many sales are lost because this order coupon is just too complicated for the would-be buyer to follow. Don't get fancy! Keep it simple, and you'll find your prospects responding with glee.

Should you or shouldn't you include a self-addressed reply envelope? There are a lot of variables as well as pro's and con's to this question, but overall, when you send out a "winning" sales letter to a good mailing list, a return reply envelope will increase your response tremendously.

Tests of late seem to indicate that it isn't that big a deal or difference in responses relative to whether you do or don't pre-stamp the return reply envelope. Again, the decision here will rest primarily on the product you're selling and the mailing list you're using. Our recommendation is that you experiment - try it both ways - with different mailings, and decide for yourself from there.