

How To Write A Perfect, Selling Ad: Five Easy Tips

By Angela Booth

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Summary: Stop wasting money on ads which don't work. Here's a fun and easy way to write perfect, selling ads, every time.

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I lied.

There's no such animal as the perfect, works-every-time, selling ad.

But I got you to read this far, didn't I? That was the title's purpose --- see Tip Two: Write an attention-grabbing headline.

I didn't lie about these tips, though. They're easy and fun to

use. And they work.

= Tip One: who's the reader? (Or viewer, or listener if you're writing for broadcast.)

Although you're writing for a crowd, it's easiest to write if you imagine you're talking to one particular person.

You can even start writing your first draft with a salutation, as if you were writing a letter: Start with "Dear Elli", and keep writing.

Who is this person? Is she old, young, married? Where does she live? What's her life like? What does she want most? What's she scared of? Why would she be interested in your product? What difference would it make in her life?

Professional copywriters spend a lot of time in this phase of the writing process. You can't motivate someone if you don't know who they are.

= Tip Two: Write an attention-grabbing headline

Your headline is vital. No one is looking for your ad. You've got to wave and yell at them to get their attention. If you don't get their attention, no sale.

Write a trial headline to get yourself started. This probably won't be the headline you'll use. However, with a trial headline, you've got a corral for your copy. You're writing to that headline.

When you've written a draft of the ad, force yourself, with a timer, to write another twenty headlines in five minutes. (Read the rest of the tips and write the benefits and the response before you write a draft.)

Don't try too hard. Who cares if they're all junk? You're writing lots of headlines to get your subconscious mind to take you seriously, and throw up the PERFECT headline. You'll never achieve this perfect headline with conscious thought. It's a gift from your subconscious, but you have to goose it into cooperating.

You may find a headline you like more than your initial headline. Just substitute it, if it fits. If it doesn't you can write another version of the ad to fit that headline's concept.

= Tip Three: Write the features first, then work out what the benefits are

Nobody buys a product (or a service) for its own sake. They buy because it benefits them in some way. The benefits are what you're selling.

You're not selling a German Shepherd puppy, you're selling an intelligent, loyal companion and family protector.

You're not selling a car, you're selling travelling comfort, prestige, and a sure-fire babe-magnet.

You're not selling a book, you're selling the adventure of a lifetime, love, romance, and sex.

To get a handle on this, take a sheet of paper and briefly list the features of your product or service on the left.

Then beside the feature, write the corresponding benefit that each feature provides.

Remember --- use the benefits in your ad.

= Tip Four: Don't forget the response!

I've lost count of the number of ads I've seen everywhere from the Yellow Pages to full display ads costing thousands in magazines, where the copywriter and everyone else forgot the response.

You must tell the reader what you want him to do. You must ask for the sale. Ask the reader to do something: call a number, come into the store, go to a Web site.

This is so important that when I'm writing an ad I always write the required response on a sticky note and tape it to a corner of my monitor. I tape it onto the screen itself, so I can't miss it. (Yes, I have been guilty of forgetting the response. And very embarrassing it was too.)

= Tip Five: Read it out loud

You've finished the final draft of your ad. Before you show it to anyone else, read it aloud.

You'll pick up redundancies, awkward sentence construction and other nasties when you read the copy aloud.

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