

# When "Sales Copy" Crosses the Line into "Hype"!

By Gord Sears

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How many times have you seen the term 'hype' used to describe 'sales copy'? Do you really know what 'hype' is? If not, how do you know exactly when 'sales copy' crosses the line into 'hype'?

While nobody exactly was asking ... it sort of dawned on me that I really wanted to define the term; 'hype', and use it to help determine the "sales copy's" credibility.

So, after a quick check via DogPile.com to do some research, here's a compilation from various online dictionaries, and their definitions ...

An advertising or promotional ploy,

Blatant or sensational promotion,

Excessive publicity and the ensuing commotion,

Promotional publicity of an extravagant or contrived kind,

Exaggerated or extravagant claims made especially in advertising or promotional material,

Something deliberately misleading; a deception.

Well ... that really helps bring some clarity to the 'Issue' of just what constitutes 'hype'.

As you can see, some distinctions need to be made here; 'hype' can be construed positively up to a point however, beyond that, becomes a liability.

Can we consider 'hype' defined positively?

The first three definitions all define the term - 'hype' however, these only relate to some 'form' of advertising or promotion. To suggest that any of these three could represent a 'bad' thing for either seller or consumer would be a disservice to marketing and the consuming public.

These may technically meet the definition of 'hype' using the first three definitions but, they must still be construed as legitimate 'sales copy'.

Any of these first three are valid and legitimate goals in marketing which do no disservice to their

potential recipients. In fact, I'd even venture that definition No.'3' would be the epitome of success for someone's marketing campaign.

The term 'hype' though, is more often construed negatively.

I don't believe anyone would disagree that 'sales copy', containing any elements of the last three definitions would have to be considered 'crossing the line' into unethical sales copy.

Consider the adjectives; 'contrived', 'exaggerated', 'misleading', 'deception' ... none of these suggest any positive benefit for their intended recipients.

These adjectives provide some logical guidelines as to what distinguishes the 'line' between legitimate 'sales copy' and 'hype'. Since almost all advertising could technically be construed as 'hype' (otherwise it would be a product or service LIST) using the first three definitions, I'll be looking for the following elements.

Any ad or sales copy containing any of the following elements should be correctly labeled as 'hype':

exaggeration,

misleading,

contrived,

deception.

Whether deliberate or accidental, any of these four elements would tend to adversely affect any long term positive campaign goals, and therefore must be considered offside by any marketing campaign standard - ethical or otherwise.

So now we have some guidelines to help differentiate between legitimate 'sales copy' and 'hype' - one that I intend to use. I hope you'll use it to sort the 'help' from the 'hype' too.

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