

Making Your Sales Copy Sell... Even In A Recession

By Karon Thackston

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Karon Thackston
karon@ktamarketing.com

KT & Associates <http://www.ktamarketing.com>

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I was talking with a group of business associates the other day and one question popped up that was of particular interest. “Is everyone finding that sales come MUCH slower these days?” The answer from all on the call was a resounding yes! The next question won’t surprise you... “What do we do about it?”

There is no doubt that individuals and business people alike are becoming more and more cautious with their money. Rather than buying anything and everything that peaks their interest, serious consideration is being given to each and every expense. That’s natural in a recession.

What that means is advertising copy has to work harder and better. No longer will a simple quip like, “You’ll love it” or “Be the first to own one” work. You have to earn each purchase. You have to prove your worth.

People who live and work in recession-laden times have specific criteria for making purchases. If your product or service “qualifies”, you get the sale. The challenge comes in determining what it takes to qualify.

I’ve said it a thousand times: “Before you write one word, get inside the mind of your customer.” You have to understand who the person/business is, what they need, what they want... and then give it to them.

In a recession, the focus turns from “trying” to “getting results”. Those who might, in an ordinary economy, try something just to see if it would work will now demand proof of results. Those who would normally take a risk will now ask for guarantees.

In order to build trust and create an atmosphere conducive to converting cautious visitors into customers, you’ll need to make three things obvious in your copy:

- 1) Benefits. Yes, even novice advertisers know about features vs. benefits. But it is imperative that you fill your copy with as many of them as it will hold. In a recession, your customers will not wonder – but will demand to know – what’s in it for them. Let them know exactly what they will get for their dollar/pound/euro.

2) Results. In addition to benefits, your recession weary customers will want proof of results. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways. Testimonials are the easiest, provided they are verifiable. You can also use online demonstrations, case studies or a number of other effective methods of showing that your product/service works.

3) Guarantee. If – for whatever reason – your product/service does not perform as expected, your customer will want a safety net. Provide a guarantee or warranty to make them feel safe about spending their hard earned money.

4) Repetition. Lastly, don't be surprised if it takes multiple exposures to your offer before a purchase comes. Instead of the usual 7-9 exposures, it may very well take 10-14 before sales come in. There are several reasons for this. Customers may need to consider, and reconsider, your offer before buying. They might need time to raise the cash to pay for your product/service. Expect – and plan for – slower conversions.

Give the customer what he/she needs to make a comfortable decision. By changing the focus of your copy to meet the qualifications of those cautious buyers in a recession, you will be able to convert leads to sales more quickly.

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