

14 Powerful Tips To Fire-Up Your Brochure

By Aran Kay

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Brochures are often the most expensive print product you produce. Therefore you want to make them as powerful as you possibly can. You want to make sure that everything from your visuals down to your text increases the chances your brochure will be read.

And not simply discarded in the trash.

I've done a lot of research to discover the best and most powerful methods to increase the readership of your brochure. Here are the 14 tips that I believe will have the most impact.

1. Focus on a target group. You don't want your brochure to be picked up by just anybody. You want it to be picked up by qualified prospects. People who might be interested in purchasing your product or obtaining your services. Therefore, if your product is intended for bikers, include a picture of a biker on the cover. Include the word bike or

biker in the headline. This will grab your target groups attention and avoid the readers who might use your brochure as entertainment during a bathroom break.

2. Use only a single visual on the cover. Research has shown time and again that one larger visual works much better than several smaller ones. Too many visuals clutter the cover page and reduce the chance that the visual will catch the prospect's eye. And draw them into your brochure.

3. Photos of people using your product work much better than photos of the product by itself. And if you think about it. It makes sense. If you were a biker that had dreams of owning that amazing, full-suspension, downhill bike, what would catch your attention more? A picture of the bike sitting in the shop? Or a picture of someone else using your dream bike and screaming downhill at break-neck speeds with a smile plastered all over their face? The second photo awakens your emotions and increases your desire to buy. That's what you want on your brochure cover.

4. Do not use smaller than 12-point fonts. Some marketers might say you can go below this, but the standard for business communications today is 12-point font. This font size is the easiest to read without being so large as to make it impossible to fit in your brochure. I do not receive a single business communication today that is smaller than 12-point font. And if I do, I feel it was inconsiderate of the company to make me squint to read their message.

5. Use captions under all of your photos. Research has shown that people read photo captions without fail. Use this bit of knowledge to your advantage.

6. Put your captions in a different typeface, a smaller font size, and in italics. Space can be tight in a brochure and differentiating caption text from body text improves readability.

7. "Using quotation marks around any text increases prospect recall greatly." I'll bet out of all these tips, you remember this one best.

8. In-set panels called sidecars can draw attention to text. Remember, you want your prospects to read your text in a certain order. Control where your prospect's eye goes by highlighting important body text with a sidecar. Eyes tend to read headline, sidecar, and then body text on any given brochure page.

9. Keep your headlines short. Less than 10 words will keep readership high. Anything more can intimidate the reader and leave your brochure on the shelf.

10. Your lead paragraph should not be longer than 12 words. People need to be eased into reading your brochure. Having a long paragraph will ensure you lose another prospect for every word you write beyond the twelfth.

11. Dingbats - or bullets, hyphens, etc. - work to draw the reader's eye. However, you need to be aware of overkill as this can slow the reader down. If your brochure is hard to read, it will be abandoned half-way through.

12. Bold and italics work well for drawing attention too. but overkill can again be your ruin. I recently read a brochure than was so full of dingbats, bold and italic text, that my eye started to get drawn to all the normal body text. Unfortunately for the brochure maker, all of the normal text was feature-heavy, unemotional, and boring.

13. Use bar charts, not pie charts. Bar charts are straightforward and easy to interpret. Pie charts ask the prospects to judge relative amount at strange angles and do not quickly add to the prospect's understanding of your material.

14. Icons can quickly draw attention to your phone or fax number. As well as your mailing or email address. Make it as easy as possible for prospects to get in touch with you. Afterall, the easier it is to contact you, the more likely they will.

Aran Kay is a freelance copywriter with experience working for Nintendo, Direct Energy, Kellogg's, The Government of British Columbia and more. He has written numerous marketing articles and includes a selection of them on his web site. www.ProfessionalCopy.ca is also your source for "The 51 Best Marketing Web Sites" which you can receive by email.

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