

4 Ways to Influence Your Audience with Words

By Lisa Sparks

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Painting the picture. It's what copywriters do all the time to draw readers into whatever they're selling. It's one of the most powerful tools in writing because it draws on the most powerful part of the human brain: Our imaginations.

The best part is that you only have to drop a few details into the copy to set off the reader's imagination. The key is knowing which words will trigger the response you want from the audience. Let's take a look at what you can do to paint just the right picture to start getting higher sales.

1. What kind of emotion does the reader need to feel before he buys?

Will the majority of your prospects need to feel like you're just like someone they grew up with or went to school with before they break out their credit cards? These are the kinds of questions you'll have to ask yourself, because even in business-to-business sales it's all about the emotional side of selling. When painting the picture, be whatever your readers want you to be so that you gain their trust. That way, they'll read every word you've written, right down to when you ask for the sale.

2. Choose a situation or experience that's familiar to your readers.

For instance, a writing coach would instantly draw me in if she mentioned the experience of seeing my name in print. Every writer gets a rush when that happens. It never gets old. What common experience does your target audience share? Quickly describe it and you've got them hooked, at least until the next paragraph.

3. Offer a clever twist on your "picture" to draw readers into the rest of your offer. Here's an example:

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Remember how it felt to go to Gino's Steaks on a Friday night to get a cheese steak with extra Cheez Whiz and onions? There was no better way to spend a Friday night if you grew up on the streets of Philadelphia.

Now you don't have to run to Gino's anymore to have that same great Philadelphia cheese steak that's famous the world over.

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Of course the reader isn't necessarily from Philly, but after reading that first paragraph he wishes he

was from there - and he wishes he had one of those cheese steaks.

4. Use negative pictures, too.

Try describing something your audience desperately wants to avoid, their worst nightmare. You'll have their complete attention because they can feel it in their bones that you're going to tell them about an easier way to eliminate at least one headache in their lives.

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You're on deadline. You have 1,000 more words to write and all of the sudden it's gone. You've hit writer's block and you've hit it hard. The outlines haven't worked. Re-reading your notes only leads you to a dead end. Following a story tree also leads your head spinning.

Although we, as professional writers, hate to admit it we've all faced it. Now there's a tool that can take the pain out of hitting the writer's block we all know is coming - sooner or later.

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Whichever picture you choose to paint, make sure it draws an emotion from your audience. Once you have that emotion, turn it so that your readers feel with every ounce of their beings that they need your product or service right then and there.

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