

Offers that Turn Lookers into Buyers

By Marcia Yudkin

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If you're getting only a sluggish response for a product or service that people genuinely need, wake buyers up by spicing up your offer. I've seen losing propositions become winners with these kinds of changes, which in most cases cost you nothing:

1. **Guarantees.** With a strong, simple guarantee, you can overcome the doubts of people who have not done business with you before, and calm down worriers who don't act when they can think of too many "what ifs." The guarantee does not have to promise a refund. Someone hiring an exterminator service wants those darned critters out, not their money back. "We guarantee you'll be pest-free for a year, or we'll come back and spray again for no extra charge" is the thing to promise them. Direct-mail professionals tell us that a one-year guarantee sells better, with fewer refund requests, than a thirty-day guarantee, and a lifetime guarantee does even better.
2. **Package deals.** If you sell office supplies, you might think that folks going back to school know how to select what they need. Perhaps, but why not make things easy for them -- and more profitable for you -- by shrink-wrapping three spiral notebooks, two packets of pens, a pocket calendar and several semi-necessary items together in a Back to School packet? This often persuades people to spend more than they would on separate items.

The same principle applies to services, where you can mobilize people who shy away from hourly fees with fixed-price bundles: only \$350 for a will and a consultation on estate planning. A name makes your bundle more appealing: \$150 for the "Get Organized Special."

3. **Premiums.** Try rousing sleepy customers with bonuses --

spend more than \$100 and receive a free whooziwhatsit, which isn't available any other way. One mail-order company offered a free booklet with any order from that catalog, and received 13 percent more orders from that catalog than previously. Similarly, frequent-buyer programs have now spread far beyond airlines, because they work. If convenience-store patrons have a card to buy nine cups of coffee and get the tenth free, they're more likely to consolidate their coffee buying rather than buying sometimes here and sometimes there.

4. Payment terms. When you let clients know they can spread payments out over two or four months, you'll snag some wavering over the money issue. But changing payment terms doesn't necessarily mean you get your money later. I know speakers and consultants who offered a 2 or 5 percent discount for payment in advance, and received their money a whole year before they would have otherwise!

With any new offer, test, test, test. You can't know any other way whether "Buy one, get the second one free" works better or worse than "Buy two and each is half price." Human beings are illogical creatures, and unexpected offers can turn this fact to your advantage.

The above is adapted from "Secrets of Mouthwatering Marketing Copy" by Marcia Yudkin, available from <http://www.yudkin.com/mouthwatering.htm> . Marcia Yudkin marcia@yudkin.com is the author of 11 books, including *Persuading on Paper* and *Internet Marketing for Less than \$500/Year*.

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