

TERRIFIC TITLES, HAPPENIN' HEADLINES

By Meredith Pond

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You've probably heard the slogan, "You never get a second chance to make a first impression." It may be a sales pitch, but in the world of advertising and promotion, it's right on the nose.

Believe it or not, a bad title or headline will turn your prospects away quicker than bad breath. When you're trying to promote a business, product, or yourself, you need people to stick around long enough to hear your sales pitch, right? Well, a bad article title or sales letter headline will turn people off before they (or you) even realize what's happening.

When you're looking for interesting articles for yourself or your ezine, what's the first thing you read? When you receive a sales letter in the mail, what do you look at first? When you stop to think about it, your title or headline is your very first opportunity to make an impression on your prospects. If that impression is a positive, creative, and exciting one, you're off to a very good start. Similarly, if that first impression is boring, worn-out, or confusing, your prospects probably won't even bother reading beyond the first line.

Before you start writing, think about your audience. No matter who they are, titles should flow from the lips easily, and give readers some idea of what they'll learn by reading on. At the same time, they should be short enough to be memorable.

Energizing a wimpy title can be as easy as Kindergarten, if you'll just think back that far. Remember when you learned about rhyme? Well, rhyming is an essential tool for writing headlines and titles. A rhyming title is catchy, and fun, almost compelling your audience to keep reading.

Rhyme isn't the only useful titling tool. Alliteration is a great way to dress up a plain-jane title. Alliteration is the repetition of a particular consonant sound at the beginning, end, or middle of two or more words (i.e. terrific titles). An

alliterative title is easy to say, easy to remember, and just plain fun to read.

A good title or headline gives your audience the idea that your article, sales letter, or other copy is going to be a great read, which is an absolute necessity if you want your first impression to lead to a second chance.

Meredith Pond is editor and manager of DrNunley's <http://CheapWriting.com> . See her low-cost writing and editing services for students and business people. Reach Meredith at meredith@drnunley.com or 801-253-4536.

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