

## 3 Words that Boost Ad Response

By Will Dylan

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Will Dylan  
askwill@marketingyoursmallbusiness.com

Small Business, Big Marketing <http://www.marketingyoursmallbusiness.com>

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Key to success is avoiding hype

For the small business owner, advertising is a critical expense that helps to drive customers through the doors or to a website on the Internet in the hopes that they will spend their money. With tight ad budgets, small businesses need their advertising to pay off every time. Ads that result in no sales are simply wasted money.

There are countless online articles that tell you to use the words “free”, “guaranteed”, and “limited time offer” in your advertising to boost sales. They work, however the ongoing overuse of these words has reduced their effectiveness somewhat. When you’re writing your next ad, keep the following advice in mind when if you plan to use these key advertising terms.

“Free” – Getting something for nothing has universal appeal and is a strong attention getter. Where most businesses fail is that they give away something that is essentially useless, leading customers to believe that your business falls into the same category (i.e. “useless”). For example, many websites give away free “e-books”, in order to entice potential customers to visit their site. The e-book itself is usually loaded with advertising and links to the website, and contains very little real, valuable information.

If you’re going to advertise a free giveaway, make it a legitimate, valuable item. If it’s an e-book, try not to make it a shameless self promotion piece that doesn’t add any value to your customers. In fact do the opposite...make it somewhat valuable. Use the quality and value found in your e-book to inspire your potential customer with confidence that you offer a quality product or service. A credible free giveaway of any kind that has value and contains no shameless self promotion will be a huge credibility boost for your business.

“Guaranteed” – Customers appreciate the safety and security that comes with a satisfaction guarantee. All reputable retailers and businesses have some type of return policy, because they know that it will encourage customers to buy, and only a small fraction of people ever bother to return anything.

The key to guarantees is to be reasonable. A 100% money back guarantee is reasonable. So is an exchange policy or warranty against defects. Some of the more recent guarantees that have emerged in advertising, especially on the Internet, are actually a turn off to a potential customer. A

“double your money back guarantee” usually makes customers wary of the seller. Why 200%? Is that what it takes to generate a sale, and if so, how good can this product or service really be? When it comes to guarantees, mirror those offered by the industry leaders in your business, and don't go too far.

“Limited Time Offer” – If you're going to offer your customers something for a “limited time” then follow through on your promise. Customers don't appreciate being lied to. If you state that your special offer expires tomorrow, then follow through on your promise and rescind your offer tomorrow, even if its only temporarily. When a business consistently offers “limited time” deals week after week, customers lose faith in the credibility of the business. Anyone who jumped on your offer believing that they only had a “limited time” to take advantage of it will now feel that you were not honest in your advertising and will not likely give you additional business in the future.

“Free”, “Guaranteed”, and “Limited Time Offer” are great tools to use in your advertising to get attention and stimulate purchases. However, overuse and abuse of these terms can be very harmful to your reputation and to your future revenue stream.

Will Dylan is the Author of “Small Business Big Marketing” a powerful e-book for small businesses available through his website [www.marketingyoursmallbusiness.com](http://www.marketingyoursmallbusiness.com) . Will also offers article and news release writing services.

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