

Time To Take A Break

By Bob Osgoodby

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Bob Osgoodby
bob@adv-marketing.com

Advanced Marketing <http://adv-marketing.com>

Every once in awhile, I sit down at the computer to write an article or copy for an ad, and nothing happens. A dozen or so, false starts later, a topic is finally decided on, and the words just won't come. Only a paragraph or two gets written, and it's time to call it a day. Later, looking at what was done, I usually highlight it, and hit the "delete" key.

Other times, the words flow as if from a "magic spring" and before I know it, the article or ad is complete, but far too long. I try to keep articles around 700 words, as ones much longer seem to drag, and quickly lose the readers interest. Effective ads should be four to six lines with 65 characters per line.

Then comes the painful task of trying to shorten it. But, you may think, everything is important, and you can't cut a word. But, you must, and will usually wind up with something that at least makes sense.

Many people, who write copy advertising their product, have the same problem. They feel they have to give every last detail about their offer in their ad. Nothing could be further from the truth.

You should try to give as much information as possible in the shortest amount of space. I know this is difficult, but the fact is that most people simply won't spend the time reading a long ad. Don't worry about the length at first. You should get all the important points down first, and then try to shorten it.

Do this for five or six ads. Then have someone, preferably someone who is not familiar with your product or service, read them. If you have six ads, have them rate them on a scale of one to six, with one being the best in their judgement. Try to get others to do the same type of rating. Be sure not to share the ratings by the other people who did this, until after the current readers rating is complete.

There may be a wide difference in the ratings, but some pattern should show up. Take the highest scoring ad, and run with it. If it draws business, leave it alone. Don't feel you have to tweak the ad every time it is published.

Better yet, move along to the second highest rated ad, and start publicizing that one. Smart entrepreneurs may run several ads in the same publication for the same product or service. Since they constructed their ads properly, people may not even realize they are from the same person.

It is highly important to track which ads are generating business. One of the easiest ways is to automatically insert a subject in the email they will send you. The following address will automatically insert the subject "5Star-Reviews as the subject when someone clicks on this address - <mailto:5star@adv-marketing.com?Subject=5Star-Reviews>

A simple way to start collecting this information is to set up separate folders in your email package. You can then, through the use of filters, automatically put each response in a folder depending on its "subject". If you don't have software that can do this, you really should get it. You can download a free copy at: <http://adv-marketing.com/business/frtest.htm> - Click on "Freebies".

Eudora is probably one of the best email clients you can get. While it does take a little time to discover all its features, it is a very desirable package for someone in business.

Once you determine which ads are pulling, stay with them. A common mistake some people make is to constantly change their ads, because they feel they are getting stale. Don't forget, it takes 5 to 7 exposures to an ad before someone may respond. If you are constantly changing your ads, you are basically starting over each time.

If you are finding it to be a "struggle" to work your business, the worst thing you can do is to give a "half-hearted" effort. You won't really be giving it, or your clients the attention they need. Many times, the best thing to do is to take a break. Take a few days or a week off. It will pay dividends as when you resume, you will have a renewed enthusiasm.

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