

22 Secret "Hot Buttons" That Make Consumers Spend Money Like Crazy

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How to Market Using Postcards

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Section: Introduction

"The Skinny": In the introduction, you'll learn about

- **Emotion** - people buy with their hearts, not their minds
- **Logic** - how we use our mind to justify what we want to do emotionally

Congratulations! You're about to learn the secrets of the human mind.

Once you know these secrets, you'll be able to use them to your advantage to transform prospective buyers into "sold" consumers time after time after time. Because as important as the quality of your product/service is to your success, it's your ability to become a Doctor of Psychology...SALES Psychology...that will really **open the financial floodgates**.

Aren't Today's Consumers "Wise" To Sales Psychology

One thing that psychologists will tell you is that there's a big difference between **what you know** in your mind and **what you feel** in your heart. Despite all consumers know about how advertising and marketing works...despite all the built-in sales resistance they've developed over a lifetime...despite KNOWING that a salesman's job is to convince us to do what's good for him (buy the product)...

Despite everything we know:

**We are all
more susceptible to persuasion than we think**

The essence of marketing is helping prospects make the *right* decisions -- the decision to buy from YOU. If you can get a handle on the **emotional reasons** your customers use to justify their decisions, then you can push those emotional hot buttons in all your printed materials, advertisements, and presentations, as well as in your face-to-face meetings and on your website.

Hearts and Minds

Are you marketing to your prospects hearts or to their minds? If your marketing materials and presentations lead with a presentation of your product's features and/or your own credentials, you've lost before you've even begun.

Why? Because...

**BENEFITS appeal to EMOTIONS
FEATURES appeal to LOGIC
LOGIC JUSTIFIES EMOTION and EMOTIONS DRIVE SALES**

Chapter: Emotional Marketing

Emotional marketing, the 'psychological operations' side of sales campaigns, is used to **overcome any objections consumers may have** about making a purchase.

Just as on any battlefield, the most effective psy-ops 'weapons' are the least obvious...stealth operators that work **regardless of who is doing the selling or what exactly they are selling.**

Food for Thought: Might for Right

The mind-influencing sales language and techniques described in this ebook are powerful...effective...and **virtually irresistible.** They can actually give you a somewhat **unfair advantage** in dealing with people who aren't familiar with them.

This means you must use what you learn with care, applying what you learn in an ethical way to unsuspecting consumers...and not try to cheat people.

This ebook presents proven tactics that will **alter the mindset of your prospects** and make them **unable to resist what you're offering.** Because as you come to understand the mind of the consumer...and as you learn the how-to's of emotional marketing, you'll also be learning

- How to create the "**gotta have it**" feeling in consumers
- How to **melt away** sales resistance
- How to tap into the "primal" **buying emotions**
- How to instantly **establish rapport**
- How to 'force' consumers to **obey your hidden 'sales push'** without resistance
- How to use "**sex appeal**" to generate buying frenzies
- How to infuse "proof power" into your sales letters to transform them into **magnetic sales message** that rack up the profits and bring in the bucks
- How to arouse your prospects **inner buying drives**
- How to influence your prospect's mind to **trust you** and **believe your information**
- How to bypass your prospects' conscious and "**hypnotize**" their **subconscious**

In a nutshell, you'll learn how to create sales messages that

**Hold Consumers Captive
from the Pre-headline to the Order Form**

Chapter: The Envelope Please! -- Emotions and Direct Mail

Once you become attuned to the emotional component that's used in advertising and marketing, you'll see it everywhere you look...and become more aware of how it's working on you. But what's really exciting is making it work on others!

Once you master the techniques of bending the human mind to your will, you'll use them everywhere! They'll be yours forever...at the ready in your 'arsenal' to be powerful weapons in all sorts of professional and personal situations.

If you want to sell something to a consumer via **direct mail**, your first job is to get that consumer to read your sales message. Not an easy feat. When your envelope arrives mixed in with bills, magazines, personal letters, and everything else in John and Jane Doe's mailbox, it may be tossed into the wastepaper basket without ever being opened.

This is one reason that postcards are so effective -- no envelope to open. It's also the reason that you find so-called "irresistible" marketing messages on the outside of a sales envelope, printed there in the hopes of hooking the consumer.

BONUS! BONUS! BONUS!

Look for a special bonus section on **marketing with postcards** at the end of the book.

The unfortunate thing is that more often than not, marketers -- choose phrases that are a turn OFF, rather than a turn ON.

To show you how this works, it's time for you to take off your marketing cap and put on your consumers hat. Read the pair of unique positioning statements below and decide which product you'd buy.

"Brand X" Jewelry Cleaning Kit

"Do you want to learn what you can do to make old worn-out jewelry look like new again?"

Widget Jewelry Cleaning Kit

"Discover how professional antiques dealers transform tarnished junk into vintage jewelry with an amazing product that's finally available to consumers."

When you read the question posed on the Brand X envelope, it's easy to say, "No, I don't want to learn something" and throw the offer in the garbage. Case closed. Sale lost.

The Widget offer, however, packs a powerful 1-2 punch emotional punch -- actually a 1-2-3 punch -- that's a real knockout. Let's break it down.

- **Your need for knowledge** is aroused by the word "discover"

We're all curious creatures who want to know more

- **Your need for trust** is stimulated by the word "authorities" We're skeptical of what advertisers may say, but we trust the opinions of professional in a given field
- **Your need for greed** (a natural instinct) likes the idea that you can use this product to make money just like the dealers...by increasing the value of what you have.

Just 20 words deliver so much psychological prodding to your brain that before you know it, you're drooling with interest and ripping into that envelope, desperate to learn more about the offer...even though you may not even have any jewelry yourself!!!

Pick a Winner

Here's another little test. Each of the three salespeople below has taken a prospective client out to lunch. Each is trying to make a sale. Each has read this book, but only one is successfully targeting emotions. (Yes, emotionally marketing techniques are just as important to selling in person as they are to selling in print.)

See if you can spot the seller who's going to seal the deal:

Seller A

"I guess it's a little crazy to talk about losing weight and health clubs here at Café Glutton. But you know, after we finish here, if you have any time left, you really should come over to Club Widget and let me give you a tour. We offer a lot of equipment and even though you have to work pretty hard, the results...although they're not guaranteed...can be really amazing."

Seller B

"I couldn't help but notice that you changed your order from a Swiss cheese burger to a naked burger. You're smart to be watching your health. More and more people who I see my health club are cutting down on dairy for heart health. In fact, I think one the reasons I think Club Widget has gotten so many new members is that people realize how important it is to exercise if you don't want to have coronary problems. And if we have any discounted memberships still available from our last promotional, this would be the best time ever to join."

Seller C

"Thanks for meeting with me over lunch. We've been so busy trying to bring Club Widget back from the edge that the only time I have a chance to eat is when I meet with someone like you. I don't want to get

into the gory details of what's going on. Our priority right now is bringing in as many new members as we can as fast as we can, but I can tell you that we're offering some really deep discounts in our 12-month membership prices."

The winner is -- Seller B. (Duh!)

Seller C was on the right psychological track. She was **building trust** -- one of the most important emotional marketing "hot buttons" -- by admitting that the club was in trouble and is working aggressively to become successful.

But by refusing to be upfront and **explain exactly** what had gone wrong at the club, Seller C accomplished the complete opposite of her goal: **loss of trust**.

Seller C's potential club member became worried that Club Widget had failed a health code inspection, was having problems with its equipment, or maybe was going to close before the year was out. That meant that joining was a bad idea.

No sale.

As for Seller A...well, let's leave that poor, misguided, soon-to-be-out-of-business soul to her sorrowful end. Everything about her presentation pushes the prospective client away. This really isn't the right moment...the solution I'm offering is hard...There's no guarantee that you'll be satisfied.

That's no way to make a prospective client feel good about doing business with you!

Chapter: Dr. Feelgood

When a prospect is considering a product or service, the #1 question on his/her mind is "What's in it for me?"

The not-so-smart marketer will try to answer that question by simply listing the **features** of a product. But the smart marketer -- usually by painting a compelling visual picture -- explains how the features will **benefit** the consumer.

So in *your* sales copy, you may **list features**, but you'll want to be sure to **describe the benefits** they offer. That's the way to answer "What's in it for me."

Test time again! See if you can you pick out the feature vs. the benefit in the product sales lines below:

- **Widget Motorized Golf Caddy** mean no more huffing and puffing on your way to the 18th hole
- **Widget Umbrella Policies** protect you and your house for up to \$250,000 so that you can sleep in peace even when there's a tornado on the horizon.

In the first example, the feature is a motor that pushes the caddy, but the benefit is not appearing out of shape when you stagger, out-of-breath to the 18th hole. The umbrella policy feature is a tangible quarter-million dollars of coverage, but the benefit is peace of mind.

Consumers buy products and services for *their* reasons, not yours. It's the reason you'll want to use the word "You" more than the word "We" in your messages. When you present the benefits of your products or services, frame them with your **prospects' emotional interests** in mind, not your own.

Can you see the difference in the two pitches below?

- Widget sells the best lawnmowers in the county
- Your lawn will look better with less work with Widget lawn mowers

In the first pitch phrase, **the message is about the company** "We are the best." In the second, **the message is about the consumer**, "You won't have to work hard to make your lawn look better."

Message #2 is the perfect answer to every consumer's question: "What's in it for me?"

Chapter: Adjust Your Focus from "Me" to "You"

You'll be sure to capture your customer's attention if you focus *your* marketing on *their* concerns.

Making A List, Checking It Twice

In marketing, you're never too old to believe in Santa Claus...or at least to learn a lesson from the jolly old elf.

Santa knows his "customers" inside and out...and you should, too. Data collection -- finding out what people want and why they buy -- and using that data correctly will get you right where you want to be: deeply rooted in their hearts and minds.

Every time your offer appears...anywhere your brand is seen, people should react to you like Santa. Your prospect should be enthusiastically imagining what fabulous 'gift' you have in store for them that will make them happier. Every time they see "Brand You," they'll think:

Santa Clause Is Coming to Town...for ME!

To sell effectively, you need to be familiar with the full range of consumers' feelings. If you know **why people buy** products and services like yours...what makes them feel good about their decision...

You can **highlight those reasons** in your sales messages to make it more effective and practically irresistible.

When asked why they're making a purchase, people generally say they're motivated by one of these **five key emotions**:

Fear of Loss
Desire for Gain
Desire for Comfort
Pride
Desire for Personal Satisfaction

Food for Thought: Don't Forget What You're Doing

Never talk about your benefits without immediately referring to your **offer**. When your potential clients are all revved-up by the benefits offered by a feature of your product, you want to capitalize on that emotion immediately.

Also seize the opportunity by repeating a "Click here to order now" message or button.

Chapter: Logic in Marketing

Okay, now that you're up to speed on the emotions behind consumer purchases, let's move on to logic. A few pages ago, you learned an important sequence of facts:

BENEFITS appeal to EMOTIONS
FEATURES appeal to LOGIC
LOGIC JUSTIFIES EMOTION and EMOTIONS DRIVE SALES

Now it's time to understand what kind of "logic" works best with consumers. The answer is a simple one: honesty.

Honesty is the Best Policy

In order to influence your customers, you need to present **true, credible facts** about your product or service. These facts will serve as the "logical justification" for the emotional purchase.

Car-Nation

The logic-emotion connection and the importance of credible facts can best be demonstrated with an example using cars.

The reasons consumers give out loud for their car purchase may be logical -- they're safer, you're higher on the road, you can see better -- but the REAL reason people buy their cars is often quite different.

The majority of people who buy sports cars like Ferrari and Porsche seldom have the opportunity to utilize their cards in high-performance mode. And many of the wave of SUV buyers will never take their car off-road.

So why are these vehicles in such demand?

It's because they're perceived as high-end luxury items, the envy of others, and Madison Avenue says owning one of these cars will immediately give you an "in" to all the same places that the 'beautiful people' go.

But all these reasons seem shallow...self-serving...self-indulgent... So consumers create **a logical reason for satisfying an emotional need**. The funny thing is that the same logic can justify many, many emotional purchases.

For example:

Some people want to **feel safe**, so they want a car that's reliable. They justify their need for safety with the logic that **a reliable car is a good investment** because it will last a long time. These buyers can be "sold" with government and insurance company auto statistics.

Some drivers are **thrill-seekers** who want to feel like NASCAR drivers. They justify their need for speed with the logic that **a high performance car is a good investment** because it will have a high resale value. Statistics from luxury car magazines are important facts to these buyers.

Still other drivers want to **feel financially astute**. They justify their need to feel smarter than the next guy with the logic that **a car that gets good mileage is a good investment**. They'll be "sold" with facts from sources like Consumer Reports.

According to the dictionary, **logic is the ability to use facts or rules to make an argument**. So super-salesmanship is about providing the FACTS to support the logic.

But don't forget, although there's certainly a great deal of LOGIC to support a consumer's decision to buy a car or truck, the purchase is actually about fulfilling an EMOTIONAL need.

Section: "Basic Human Needs" Buttons

"The Skinny"

In this section, you'll learn about the **marketing hot buttons** that 'activate' the desire to fulfill some of these basic human needs.

Chapter: The 9 Basic Needs of People in the 21st Century

Generally when people talk about basic human needs, they're talking about our most primitive drive for **food, shelter, clothing, and love**.

We aren't taught to need these things, the desire for them is hot-wired into our genetics and are responsible for our primary motivation as human beings: to **avoid pain** and **maximize pleasure**.

No longer primitive, and generally able to satisfy this quartet of the most basic of needs, contemporary humans are now free to expand their "gotta have it" list to include...

- **Security** - the need to feel safe
- **Adventure** - the need for a "rush"
- **Freedom** - the need for independence and spontaneity
- **Exchange** - the need to share information and knowledge
- **Power** - the need to be in a position of authority
- **Expansion** - the need to build and grow
- **Acceptance** - the need to be accepted by others
- **Community** - the need to be around people like ourselves
- **Self-Expression** - the need to reveal ourselves through speech, actions, dress, etc.

If your marketing copy can demonstrate that you can meet any of these basic needs...or, better still, that you can **satisfy a combination of needs**...then selling your product or service is a snap.

Chapter: The Fear Button

You probably don't sit around thinking about worst-case health scenarios, but insurance companies do. They use those scenarios and the fear attached to them to **shock you into buying a product** that you wouldn't have considered otherwise.

Our fears, whether they're of **illness, loss, or social rejection** motivate us to make wise decisions by forcing us to consider negative possibilities -- "Will I die if I don't follow this diet?" "Will my business collapse if I don't purchase this software?" "Will I be embarrassed if I don't use this deodorant?"

There are three kinds of consumer 'fears' that you can leverage to your advantage.

- Fear that the **status quo** will go from good to bad and from bad to worse if he/she doesn't buy your product
- Fear that the consumer will be **paying more than is necessary** unless he/she does business with you
- Fear of **making a mistake** in choosing a solution unless it's YOUR solution
- Fear of **losing out on an opportunity** unless they act now and purchase your product.

Food for Thought: Fear of Loss is A Biggie

When writing your marketing materials, bear in mind that people **respond more to what they are going to lose** than to what they are "going to gain. It's called "fear of loss."

Ask yourself: **What will my customers stand to lose** if they do not buy my product or service? When you've figured out the answer, you've identified a key sales point for your sales letter.

A word of caution: Fear works when an **optimal level of fear** is evoked. Not too much, not too little, but a level of fear that's just right.

How do you know what's optimal? That's tricky. You need to go to a level of fear that's **strong enough to scare people into action**, but not so strong that it makes them so disturbed that they just turn off and stop reading.

And, of course, you should only use fear as a button when it's clear that there is a way to avoid the feared stimulus is **explicitly indicated** -- and the way to avoid it is with your product.

Chapter: The Self-Centered Button

Even if they're the nicest people in the world, your customers and potential customers don't care about you, your philosophy, or your business. But don't take it personally. They don't even really care about the technical specs of a product, either.

Their concern is much narrower.

What "floats the boat" of a consumer are the **benefits they'll receive** from buying a product or service: how it will **make their lives easier**, how it will make them **irresistible to the opposite sex**, how it will make them the **rich beyond their wildest dreams**.

Don't say you're great in your marketing efforts; **demonstrate the benefits** of buying from you, using **specific facts and figures**. Tell your prospect in simple, straightforward language how your products or services are **better than all the rest**.

It should be **all about them** and **very little about you**. Everything you say and write should answer the question "What's in it for me?"

Consumers are especially interested in **extra incentives**, bonuses, and "value-added" packages because when they're considering a purchase, they're constantly trying to figure out **what they'll gain**.

Food for Thought - "Greed" Self-Exam

Want a simple test to see if your copy is good for the greedy? Count the number of "I's" you have in your text and then compare it to the number of "You's." and you'll know in an instant whether you're writing to your prospect...or to your ego.

If your offer is greed oriented, then words and phrases like "money"; "get rich" ; "six-figures"; and "make money easily" will excite your readers. Ideally you want to use many **small, one syllable words** that your prospects can relate an emotion to.

Pick five or six key words that will stir up the **need for greed** and plant them liberally throughout your marketing copy to spark the emotional reaction that's the catalyst for a sale.

Greed, no matter what anybody says, is a part of the human psychological make-up. Everybody wants more...especially for less. If your message promises to help the individual **get a bigger piece of the pie**, then it will attract attention and generate sales.

Just remember: Greed is good. Maybe not from a societal point of view, but from a marketer's perspective, it sure is!

Chapter: The Curiosity Button

All creatures are curious...especially humans. We explore our world rather than just respond to it, looking under rocks, pulling back curtains, and poking sticks into things.

To arouse curiosity: The following words and phrases are proven to **turn apathy into interest**:

Discovered!
Someone spilled the beans...
The answer you've been looking for...
Sneak Peak
For Your Eyes Only

The following headlines are laser-focused on the curiosity of their individual target audiences:

Secrets for Making Money With Time Shares
What The Diet Companies Don't Want You To Know
Mysteries of A Satisfying Sex Life Revealed
The Professionals-Only Guide to Car Buying

To make curiosity work for you: After you **create the "itch"** that needs to be scratched, you must then make it abundantly and IMMEDIATELY clear that you can **provide the solution to the itch**. For example:

**There's a trick to giving up cigarettes for good...
and we've got it on the next page!**

**You won't believe what our supplier did...
and now YOU can take advantage of her mistake**

**The journey to financial freedom doesn't have to take forever...
If you know the short cut that WE do**

Our **passion for discovery** is hardwired, so **stimulating curiosity** is a powerful force that you can use to lure consumers to "go deeper" into your copy. Curiosity gains and holds the consumer's attention long enough for the rest of the sales message to be delivered.

Most people don't like advertising and won't make the effort to open a solicitation if they think they are getting an advertising message -- unless they are sincerely interested in buying something that the advertisement offers...OR if their curiosity is aroused.

Chapter: The Sex Appeal Button

Does sex sell? You bet! Sex is the **second strongest of our instincts**, right behind self-preservation.

Since anything having to do with sex tends to get our attention, it's a perfect tool for marketing!

- Billboards advertising alcohol that used sexual appeals were **remembered 91% more often** compared to those without sexual appeals.
- The annual Sports Illustrated Swimsuit edition generates **sales to 59 million readers**, compared to the magazine's average of 21 million
- The **Cosmo "Sex Poll" issue** sold 2.3 million copies compared with its average 1.7 million copies.

For Sexy People Only

The sexually charged images in advertising lead a consumer to believe that by purchasing the products, he/she will look like the people in the ads...have fun like the people in the ads...**BECOME** the people in the ads.

Advertisers use **different strategies for each gender** and with good reason. "Sexually appealing" has a different meaning for men and women. A study conducted at Washington State University showed that **simply showing a woman's body attracts a man's attention and convinces him to buy**.

Why? Because men associate getting the model with buying the product.

Women, however, use intellect and romance — in addition to anatomy — as a means of relating to men. That's why **ads targeting women are less explicit** and will focus on romance rather than the sex act.

Sex work best when the product or service can **honestly promise increased sex appeal** such as fragrances, cosmetics, clothing, personal hygiene products, and especially cars. With products like these, **enhanced sexiness** can be a persuasive product benefit, and thus the focus of your ad.

The use of strong or mild sexuality can help attract and sustain attention, no matter the product or service. From the FCUK brand of clothes, to Hyatt Hotel's "Who are you sleeping with?" campaigns.

Food for Thought: When in Rome...or Nepal...or Kabul

If you're marketing to an international marketplace, keep in mind that sexual values and taboos vary greatly around the world and are constantly evolving.

Chapter: The Free Button

When you give a potential customer a **free gift**, you don't expect a gift back...you expect business.

The "Law of Reciprocity" states that when you give people something, they will want to give you something in return. It's the reason there's a prize in the McDonald's "Happy Meal", why tradeshow vendors have "premiums", and the thinking behind advertising agencies taking prospective clients to dinner. In each instance, the hope is that the freebie will result in more business.

When you offer free gifts, make it clear that you have with no expectations of anything in return. For example, "If you're thinking about installing an in-ground pool, I'd like to send you my free report Pool Installation Made Easy. Whether you buy your pool from me or not, this guide will make the process much, much easier."

An offer like this says, "I'm a good guy." That will make it more likely that someone wish to reciprocate your kindness by **giving you their business**.

It's also important that the gift be given **"free and clear."** "Buy something and get a free gift" is much less appealing than "Get a free gift with no cost or obligation."

Your reciprocal relationship, like any relationship, is a two-way street, and you'll never get better than you give. It's important that the gift you offer has real value and is something that will deliver a genuine benefit.

Offering a free subscription to Playboy with every box of Trojan condoms you sell makes sense. Offering a box of Godiva chocolates when a customer purchases the South Beach Diet book is not.

Food for Thought: "Thank You" Gift

It appears that even a **warm, friendly comment of gratitude will activate the obligation to reciprocate** on the customer's part.

A New York university conducted an experiment in a medium-sized electronics store. A subject entering the store was told in a warm and friendly manner: "Thank you for shopping here today. We appreciate having you as our customer." As a control, the next shopper entering the store was not told anything.

The average amount of money spent by subjects who received the appreciatory comment was \$408.03; the average amount spent by the 100 subjects who were not told anything was \$240.54.

And it didn't cost a penny to say thank you!

Section: "Feel Good" Buttons

The Skinny: In this section, you'll learn what "hot buttons" can be added to your sales message with the express purpose of **making your prospect feel good**.

I like to feel good. So I do things that make me feel that way -- from brushing my teeth with a toothpaste that I like to wearing a jersey with the name of my favorite team to using a high-powered weed-whacker to make my lawn look great.

I also try to avoid all the things that make me feel bad. I think most of us are the same way in this regard. We like to **feel good** and **follow pathways that get us to a place where that need is satisfied**.

If It Feels Good, Buy it NOW

The quest for "feeling good" is what makes us tick a lot of the time. We buy a vast range of products hoping they'll improve the quality of our lives by helping us to **feel better** about ourselves or by **making some tasks easier**.

Wendy Liebmann, president of the consulting firm WSL Strategic Retail, told U.S. News and World Report. "For consumers, when it comes to buying luxury goods, special services, or even expand-your-horizons experiences, "don't put off till tomorrow" has become more than a homespun aphorism; it's become **a way of life**."

Food For Thought: The Pleasure Principle

If consumers are oriented to feeling good, that's what you should be selling -- products and services that help them **avoid pain and enjoy pleasure**.

As the saying goes: Give the people what they want!

Chapter - The Instant Gratification Button

In a lightening-fast world with everything happening at supersonic speed, consumers expect instant gratification in everything they do.

Blame it on technology, or the Internet, or even MTV. Blame it on 60-second sound bites, instant drink mixes, scratch-and-win lottery tickets, and microwave ovens. Blame it on whatever you wish, but there's one thing that's clear:

**People are much more likely to BUY NOW
if you can deliver instant gratification.**

When the Consumer Says: I Have An Emergency!

There's nothing like an urgent situation or pressing emergency to crank up the need for instant gratification. A teenager with a blemish on the night of the school prom can't wait for a 7-day cure. A guy who wants to watch a pay-per-view boxing match can't wait for a week for cable installation.

And which Yellow Pages ad do you think will appeal to a homeowner who has just lost his roof in a hurricane???

Brand X Roof Repair - We Repair Roofs
Call 555-1212 for estimate

or

Widget Roof Repair is waiting for you at 555-1212
Instant service for emergency roofing needs

Many companies would think that the Brand X ad is just fine. It gives the name of the company, contact information, and explains what the company does. Nothing in it says, "We understand your need and we can fulfill it."

The Widget ad, on the other, is all about the consumer.

In the following example, instant gratification comes from the consumer's ability to download a product from the Internet and **get relief from a problem without having to wait.**

When the Consumer Says: I Have No Patience

People will buy a product that can be delivered instantly over a product that will take time to deliver. This is why downloadable eBooks are such a hit. Click a button, enter your credit card number and in a matter of seconds, you've got what you ordered. There's no worry and no waiting.

Food for Thought - Instant Credit

Credit cards feed instant gratification by allowing our needs to be attained instantly, even **before we have the money to pay** for it.

Chapter - The Enthusiasm Button

There's an anonymous quote I really like that goes like this:

Money buys, but enthusiasm sells.

(I also like the one that says "Jesus Saves, But Moses Invests")

If Daniel Webster had been in sales and marketing rather than the dictionary business, he'd have said that **enthusiasm is the process of transferring your excitement** for your services to your prospects and clients.

If you can get your prospects as enthusiastic as you are, they'll be eager to buy.

In ancient Greece, smart people thought enthusiasm was a gift from the gods. And in today's world, the same thing is true -- people with enthusiasm have the special power to convince, motivate, and sell, sell...sell.

"One of the most distinctive features of a high producing club vs. a low producing club is the level of enthusiasm that the staff emits." -- Michael Fahey, Fitness Business Pro Magazine

Dale Carnegie -- he's the "power of positive thinking" guy -- tells the story of a speaker who was promoting an idea that was absolutely and utterly ridiculous. Yet, at the end of the presentation, people were eager to "buy in" to what the speaker was selling. If the idea was absurd, what convinced the audience?

According to Carnegie: enthusiasm. The speaker was passionate and enthusiastic about his subject. As a result, **more than half the audience never questioned his authority**...they just bought his product.

Food for Thought: Enthusiasm is Contagious

If you're not enthusiastic about what you're selling, why should anyone else be? To the consumer, your enthusiasm reflects on your credibility.

Your enthusiasm is also a reflection of your passion for your product or service. When you're genuinely excited about something, it comes across naturally because...well, because it IS natural -- honest, authentic enthusiasm that comes from the heart.

The FREE BONUS of Enthusiasm

At the end of the day **you'll feel better selling something you believe** in. So try to focus your work on products, services, and ideas you truly feel positive about.

And try to sell to people who are very likely get **real benefit** from what you sell, too. That way everyone is enthusiastic!

Chapter - The Specificity Button

A mental picture can stimulate the strong emotions that are the fertile soil for planting the "seeds" of buying.

However, while a picture in a museum or art gallery can be impressionistic, expressionistic, or cubist, the picture you "paint" with your marketing copy must be realistic...and, even more importantly, it must be **specific**.

"The surest way to arouse and hold the attention of the reader is by being specific, definite and concrete." -- William Strunk and E.B. White

Being specific is as a "word painter" is the difference between creating a vague image with copy like...

"Widget's Tomato-Field-in-a-Bucket
Helps You Grow Lots of Tasty Tomatoes at Home"

and the clear, emotionally compelling statement

"Widget's Tomato-Field-in-a-Bucket
With of soil, easy-to-use support sticks, and tomato seedlings
that will produce pounds of ripe red fruit ready for the picking.

Specifics are **more believable**, compelling, and more likely to "close the deal"

The Numbers Game

Studies have shown that **people rated copy as more believable** when the numbers used were "**non-round**." (You know what it means to round up and round down, right? 17 rounds up to 20, 42 rounds down to 40, etc.)

For example, if you listed "14 Super-Tricks for Losing 20 lbs." it gives the impression that someone actually studied the process and identified the fourteen best ways to drop pounds. In contrast, "10 Super-Tricks ..." sounds boring and somewhat pre-fab.

Kind of like "A dozen doughnuts" or " a six-pack of soda."

For for Thought: Seven Heaven

In a study done by the Wall Street Journal the number seven (7) has been found to be **the number that most people respond to**. Talk about lucky! So try to end your prices with a seven.

Winners and Losers

During a study for a hypothetical new brand of imported beer, it was noted that benefit statements such as these were unable to grab attention or interest:

Our lager is a **popular** Bavarian beer
Our beer has **great taste**
This lager is **affordable**

But when the test marketers changed their statements from the general ones above to the specific ones below, they also **changed consumers from extremely disinterested to positively captivated:**

Bavaria's #1 selling beer **since 1995**
Consumers preferred our lager **5-to-1** over American beers and leading imports
Our Lager is affordably **priced at \$1.79** per six-pack of 12-oz. bottles

Make A Date...And Make It Specific

Don't say "Ending Soon" say "Ending on Monday, June 19th at 5PM" when you have a sale or special offer.

Afraid that people will stop buying after June 19th when the 'deal' has ended?
There's an easy solution to that...

If you decide that your campaign offering "3 Months Service FREE when you purchase a Widget Lawn Rider by May 1st" was a winner, then just **launch a new campaign** for June, July, August, or any month when the grass is green!

The key to an **expiration date** is that it can (and should) **continue to be changed** as long as your marketing outreach is working.

Food for Thought: Don't YOU Let the Offer Expire

A consumer who rushed to meet an expiration date won't be angry that it was extended...if they even notice that it was. He/she will be too busy enjoying the benefits of the purchase to care.

Chapter - The Acknowledgement and Flattery Button

The need to be recognized and have our achievements applauded is universal. It's a basic human need and an **integral part of human nature**. In fact, millions of people around the world spend millions of dollars on psychotherapy seeking "**acknowledgement**" and "**validation**."

If you make your customers feel good -- about themselves as well as their purchase -- they'll want to continue to do business with you. When it comes to buying, consumers want to think that they're **intelligent and savvy**. So, when consumers make a 'smart' choice (buying from YOU!) - **congratulate them on their wisdom!**

Syms, a discount clothing store in the U.S., uses a slogan that says, "An Educated Consumer is Our Best Customer." But what the consumer **hears** is:

**"I'm educated, I'm smart, and
THE MORE I BUY AT SYMS, THE SMARTER I MUST BE!!!**

Only You

You can also acknowledge your customers with a "**just for you**" **deal or discount** or a **Preferred Customers Only** offer.

Who are your preferred customers? Anyone you want them to be. An old customer, a new customer, or anyone you want to target. What makes them feel preferred (aka "special") is the offer you make:

- Come Back Again! -- 50% off your next meal at Widget Pig-Out Cafe
- New members who join the Widget Rifle Club receive a free set of targets

The Sincerest Form of Flattery

Master marketer Joe Vitale uses flattery to best advantage on this website like this:

"You are really smart to be reading this. Few people are wise enough or aware enough to sign-up for a weekly ezine that will help them earn more money and lead happier lives. You're the exception. You are probably a leading-edge thinker and more aware than any of your friends or peers. Note how you felt when you began reading this week's commentary.

Didn't you feel good as you read "You are really smart to be reading this"? Didn't you also feel good about ME for noting how smart you are? Everyone responds to flattery. You. Me. Everyone. It is a principle that---used with sincerity---can make you rich."

Joe knows!

Chapter - The Exclusivity Button

Have you ever walked into one of those trendy, high-end fashion boutiques? You know...the ones that have just three or four dresses on display in an enormous space that could easily house a car showroom?

Ever wonder why the stock is so limited? It's not because there's no room for it or because the buyer couldn't find more appealing products. It's not because the store didn't have enough money to stock up. The reason is **exclusivity** at work!

Limit Your Offer For Unlimited Appeal

Ladies' clothing is mass-produced, so displaying only one dress at a time gives it an air of exclusivity. (Think of how that same dress would look in a store on a rack with a hundred dresses just like it in all the different sizes.)

In a world where mass-production is the name of the game, an offer of exclusivity is especially appealing. Ms. Shopper thinks to herself, "There's no other person in the world like me and no other dress in the world like this one. I must have it."

When your marketing says, "This product/service is a limited edition," consumers hear this: "I'll have something that other people won't and they'll **envy** me." So, Ms. Shopper and her equally exclusive-minded companion Mr. Shopper are easily won over with marketing phrases like these:

**Limited edition
Limited production
Limited number available**

Essentially exclusivity puts a buyer in a "one up" position from everyone else, providing a big boost to the ego along with "bragging rights." It can be used to market all kinds of products and services, from fine art to French fries.

Now don't kid yourself -- the Shoppers aren't idiots. They're aware of the difference between ready-to-wear and custom-designed apparel.

Intellectually, they know that the few pieces on display represent dozens of other garments in the back room. But despite what the Shoppers know intellectually...it's **how the exclusive ambience of the store makes them feel emotionally** -- that will drive their purchases.

We already know that positive emotions are the "big dogs" when it comes to motivating people to make a purchase. An exclusive offer gives buyers a **tremendous jolt of "feel good"** by making them part of an inner circle.

Food for Thought: The concept of exclusivity is also extremely concrete. There's **no interpretation required**, no need to figure out what it means. "Only 10 available" means exactly what it says.

Chapter - The "Five Senses" Button

There's a saying in marketing: Make them see it, feel it, and believe it...and they'll buy it. If your sales copy can turn your prospects into "**mental users**" of your product or service -- help them "see" themselves AFTER the sale -- then you're more than half-way towards turning your "mental cases" into real users.

Nothing beats a **hands-on experience**...a "test drive," so to speak. In some instances, you can give your prospect something to feel, handle, manipulate, or examine. Do that and watch your prospect **mentally take possession** of your product or service almost instantly.

The next best way to get your prospect's imagination going is **with vivid storytelling**. If you paint a picture that's rich in descriptive detail, you'll get the prospect to see themselves in the picture as the satisfied owner of your product.

Give consumers a **3D view** of what you're selling by **appealing to their senses**. Copywriting with the five senses in mind will pump up your copy for any product.

Effective descriptions should **fill the gap** of what customers would see, hear, smell, taste, or feel if they were standing in the presence of the product. Effective descriptions should **draw customers in and create an actual event...** as if they were able to be right there with you.

Tell Me A Story...About ME

We all love to hear about ourselves and to imagine ourselves happier, healthier, and wealthier. That's why phrases with the word "you" in them are so appealing.

- This product will **allow you to work less** and spend more time traveling
- Our service means that **you'll never have to climb** up on the roof again

One of my favorite examples of this concept is the story of admen Bert and Ernie. Bert says to Ernie, "I'll bet you \$100 that I can get our boss, I.M. Impossible, to read a full page ad without even trying." Since I.M. was a notorious non-reader, Ernie figured he was a sure winner and was already dreaming of an expensive steak dinner paid for by Bert.

What Ernie didn't figure on was Bert's super-marketer skills understanding that Mr. Impossible was easily turned into Mr. E.Z. Sale with the right marketing approach. All Bert had to do was get the boss interested...to see himself in the picture.

How'd he do it? Bert simply put "This Is About Mr. Impossible," as the headline at the top of the sales page.

For an outstanding article on marketing to the senses, visit <http://www.clickz.com/experts/brand/brand/article.php/1464261>

Section: "Easy" Buttons

The Skinny: In this section, you'll learn how the promise of less work and less effort for your customer will bring **more sales and more money for you!**

Chapter: The All-in-One Easy Button

Everyone is looking for a **magic pill**...for a longer life, more youthful looking skin, a fat bank account.

(Heck, I'd buy a "magic pill" to solve my most pressing problem, wouldn't you?)

But, as we all know, there are no magic pills. That doesn't mean, however, that you can't take advantage of the consumer's **insatiable need for a magic pill** by crafting your marketing message to **solve all their problems in a single stroke** like this:

- "When you hire a babysitter from the Widget Employment Agency, you get a nanny, a housekeeper, AND an accomplished cook for one low daily rate."
- "Purchase a 3-piece Widget Weekend Set and we'll include an overnight bag, luggage tags AND a leather passport case. All YOU need to bring is your tickets!"

Magic Moment

Sometimes people are looking for a magic pill to do everything. Other times that need a magic pill that will do one thing NOW. Alka-Seltzer promises **instantaneous relief** for heartburn sufferers. Digital cable offers **movies when you want them without going to the store.**

If you can't promise **instant results** with your product, offer **fast results.** For example: "When you order online, we'll ship your Widget Herb Garden to you via overnight mail so you can have a rosemary, basil, and oregano in time for Sunday dinner."

Food for Thought: Reverse Psychological Tactic

How do you like this one: **Admit to your customer that there is no magic pill:**

"Dear Friend, I'm sorry to say there's no magic pill for repairing bad credit after bankruptcy. You can't just read my book and expect the banks to welcome you again with open arms. "But you CAN expect to get the tools you need to take the steps you MUST in order to..."

Get the picture?

Chapter - The Convenience Button

Whatever else they want, it is clear that **consumers want an easy shopping experience**-- the ability to **buy what they want, when they want**...without having to work too hard or travel too far. It's why package good stores are often also called **convenience stores**.

When the mall shopping arrived, consumers were treated to a wider selection and lower prices, not to mention a food court, rides, and entertainment...all under one roof. It was predicted that malls would run local "mom and pop" shops out of business, and many small businesses did fall by the wayside.

Many...but not all.

Some local businesses **continue to thrive because they provided convenience**. Convenience is the consumer's best friend, so you should make it your hardest working employee.

The Internet has rocketed demands for convenience to an extraordinary new level. Consumers have learned to expect everything from **instant "analysis"** of loan applications and **instant approval** of mortgages, **instant delivery** of eBooks, and **instant love** at dating sites.

Defining Convenience

What is convenience? Convenience is different things to different people. For a single parent, convenience is the ballroom at Ikea where kids can play while parents take care of business. For a senior who no longer drives, free delivery from the pharmacy is important.

ATM cards have also re-defined convenience since this give us round-the-clock access to our money. They are also **self-promoting**. Since the cards are used in public, people who do not yet hold the cards can see how convenient they are.

Food for Thought: Convenience Trumps Fear

Although some people were concerned about security, convenience seemed to be a **decisive factor** in the "tug-of-war" for and against their adoption.

Ask your customers what convenient services would best fit their needs and get busy implementing those ideas, concepts and service. The benefit is two-fold.

First, your "market research" with existing customers gives you outstanding **insight into what potential new customers will want**. Second, when your existing customers see you take ACTION, they'll know that you truly listened to them and care enough to be responsive to their requests.

That's the way you build customers FOR LIFE.

Section - "Don't Worry" Buttons

The Skinny: In this section, you'll learn how to overcome objections and sales resistance by obliterating worry.

Objections Are Your Friends

Sounds crazy, doesn't it. Yeah -- crazy like a fox! If a potential customer is voicing objections, it means that he/she is at least somewhat INTERESTED. Otherwise there'd be no reason to raise an objection.

Sometimes an objection...even the loudest, most emphatic-resounding "no"...isn't really a no at all. It's just **a request for a solution to a problem.**

And as a master marketer, you're "filthy" with solutions!

Chapter - The Fear of Making A Mistake Button

We talked earlier about how to use fear -- a basic human nature button -- to motivate a consumer to buy: fear of a lost opportunity, fear of illness, etc. But there's **another side to fear.** For many people,

Their fears are what keep them from making the purchase.

Fears Are Objections That Are Waiting To Be Spoken

Consumers' fears can kill your sales, so as a marketer you need to declare open season on them. You need to target those fears and then make sure you've **provide enough information** about benefits, guarantees, etc. to stop them in their tracks before they start doing their dirty work on the mind of your prospect.

What are consumers afraid of?

- Did I buy the best?
- Did I buy a lemon?
- Did I overpay?
- Did I buy something I really didn't need?
- Will I get what was promised?
- Will I be able to get a refund if I made a mistake?
- Do I really need this?

What To Do...And What Not To Do

If your marketing message is able to diffuse objections by anticipating and answering them in advance, that's great. If a consumer DOES raise an objection, don't freak out. It may not mean what you think.

If possible, try to delay confronting a prospect's objection until you've completed your presentation so that you don't get side-tracked. The trick here is to **make it clear that you're not dogging the question/objection.**

Chances are, you'll answer the question in your presentation, so make a statement like, "I'll be covering that point in a moment, and at the end of our conversation, I'll be happy to answer any questions or objections you may have."

- DO **listen carefully** before answering.
- DO **act interested** in the objection.
- DO **restate the objection** before answering it. (Make sure that you fully understand it. If not, get clarification.)
- DO **isolate the objection** while trying to determine the real, or hidden, objection.
- DO **convert the objection** into the form of a question.
- DO **answer the objection**

- DON'T place **undue emphasis** on any objection. (It may simply be a question.)
- DON'T treat any objection as an **unjustified question**, either by facial, vocal or body expression.
- DON'T **anticipate** what the person is trying to say. (You'll probably misunderstand and offend the prospect.)
- DON'T **interrupt** when someone is making an objection. (Your potential customer will be much more relaxed if you let him finish the question and more receptive to your answer if he feels you're giving a response to what he's saying, not a "canned" sales response.)

When you've gone through these steps, ask your prospect: "Does that satisfy your concern?" or, "Have I answered your question?" or "**Does that put your mind at ease?**"

Your job is to pinpoint the sub-text of what a prospect is saying. Find out if the voiced objection is the only one. **When a potential customer has an objection, you want to answer it...**not get into an argument. Soften your response with phrases such as "I suggest" and "as you know."

One approach is to say, "That's a good point to consider. Your question is whether this is the smart thing to do, isn't it?" The essence of what you're asking is, "**If I can satisfy you on this one point, you wouldn't have any objection to buying immediately, would you?**"

Food For Thought: Look for Hidden Meanings

"I can't afford it," is a self-protective, way of saying, "Can you lower the price?" "I can't wait," is a buyer's way of asking, "Can you deliver it fast?"

Chapter - The Credibility Button

Thanks to decades over the top promises and out-and-out lies, marketers are selling products in "The Age of Skepticism." Today's consumer has gone from skeptical to suspicious, wanting to know **the truth behind ad claims**, warranties, brochures, and guarantees whether they're buying a luxury sports car or a can of cola.

Most consumers don't trust what you're telling them because they've been burned so many times before. They are understandably mistrustful and think of buying and selling as an **adversarial relationship** where the seller is trying to take advantage of the buyer.

You will need to be proactive in **overcoming this natural distrust** to successfully make a sale from someone they barely know. You're going to have to tear down walls of **fear and skepticism** before you can build up a relationship with a consumer).

One strategy is to **provide factual information** in an unbiased way that will allow a consumer to make his/her informed decision. A great way to do this is with information products or a "report." When consumers think you're **INFORMING** them, they'll respect you and **thank you for your openness and honesty by purchasing from you.**

Nothing sounds more authoritative than **third-party facts and figures** and quotes from **trusted authorities** like these

- **Government agencies**
- **Noted authorities**
- **Editors of industry trade magazines**
- **Research groups**
- **Celebrities**
- **Satisfied customers**

Are you wondering why a satisfied customer ranks as a trusted authority? Like celebrities who are trusted because of their fame rather than their expertise, your satisfied customers have "been there and done that." Their experience qualifies them as authorities.

Food for Thought - Testimonials Can't Be Beat

Research shows that **testimonials build credibility** more than any other strategy.

Chapter - The Consistency Button

Contrary to popular belief, familiarity does not breed contempt. In fact, familiarity breeds sales. Studies have indicated that it takes an average customer as many as a half-dozen exposures to any type of advertising before he/she is sold.

How long has it taken Coca Cola or Dunkin Donuts to become household words? A lot longer than one advertisement, one press release, or one direct mail campaign.

The pathway to familiarity is **consistency**.

Consistency is what **yields results**. So it's important for you to **maintain a consistent tone** and look to your advertising and advertising messages.

Advertisements: Your ads should use consistency to **establish brand recognition**. They can be **institutional** (conveying a general theme of who you are and what you do), **educational** (A CPA might offer some practical tax preparation tips in April advertisements) or "**call to action**" in nature, as long as they hit the same "notes" each time.

Direct mail: Your marketing campaign should include **some form of mailing at least a half dozen times a year** to your current clients and prospective ones. This can be in the form of a **newsletter, a series of postcards, or a combination**.

Public Relations: This includes everything from **announcements, press releases, and feature articles on** new hires, new products, new services, and new client relationships. As a minimum, you should strive for **one announcement per month** to be sent to your local, regional and industry

Make Sure Everyone Is On Board

Consistency is not just about using the **company letterhead** or adding your unique positioning statement to the bottom of your newspaper ads. It's about ensuring that every member of your team -- human players and marketing messages -- is in sync.

Appoint yourself the Minister of Consistency and lay down the law as follows:

- Work out how various groups and departments in your company should **implement marketing messages** in what they do
- Ensure that people who **understand marketing messages** at a spoken level can also write them down.

- Create a **communications "manual"** that lays down how messages should be interpreted and implemented across all departments who put out company messages.
- Invest in some **basic training in business writing skills** for ALL employees who will write stuff, even internally -- secretaries, technical people, HR staffers, trainers, sales people, etc

Your Marketing Message Isn't For You

Have you given your message a chance to do its job before you stop or change it? Or did you think, "This is the third time I've sent out this message. How boring. I'm going to change it."

Hold on, pardner. You're about to lose your consistency edge.

Usually the person that grows tired of a repeated marketing message is the marketer! The prospective customer probably won't be nearly so sensitive to the repetition. Don't forget, most consumers need to be contacted as many as 8 times before they sit up and take notice.

Different audiences will require different frequencies of messages. Each must be evaluated as to the **optimum effectiveness**. If a quarterly newsletter isn't working, try switching over to a monthly edition. If your daily email messages aren't yielding results, cut back to twice-a-month and see what happens.

The three most important words in successful marketing are "testing, testing, testing." Consistency and frequency are just one more component to be evaluated when troubleshooting your marketing efforts.

Food For Thought - Quotable Quote

"Whether consistency is boring depends largely on how often the message is rolled out and to whom it's delivered. If you have **a mature understanding of your market**... then a consistent approach can be very successful.

"There is a tension between consistency and creativity – but it's a healthy one." -- William Stancer, Director of Marketing Resources, Accenture.

Chapter - The Truth Button

The 21st Century consumer has a very sensitive "B.S. Meter" when it comes to advertising claims and anything that is **exaggerated** will immediately send their arrow into the "red zone" that says, "Lies. Do not buy."

Everyone loves a good story. As you learned earlier, story-telling is part of effective marketing. But it's **truth-telling** that really connects with consumers. That's why so many movies are promoted as "Based on a true story."

Food for Thought: To Tell the Truth

Truth is not only stranger than fiction, it's also more **magnetic**, more **appealing**, and **more likely to stimulate a consumer to buy**.

When a **true story** is done right, your essential marketing message -- "This product works!" -- is obvious and powerful, even though there's nothing in the message that screams "HARD SELL" to a reader.

Just The Facts Ma'am

"Case histories," are usually 300 to 400 words in length. Less than that and you won't be able to get your marketing message across. Any longer and the reader may "bail out" before finishing the story. (The reader will want to hear more of the story where he/she has the starring role.)

Where do you **case histories** come from? Why from real life, of course!

- **Do you have a compelling customer success story you can use that demonstrates your company's superiority?** (Did your customer's sneaker sales quadruple after they put an advertisement in your health club's newsletter, for example?)
- **Do you have an engaging customer satisfaction story about your product's efficacy?** (Did your customer see her pregnancy stretch marks become less visible using your skin cream and go on to enter and win a mommies' beauty pageant, for example?)
- **Has one of your employees performed a heroic act on the part of a customer?** (Did your claims adjuster move heaven and earth to reach a policyholder whose home was flooded?)

Leave out any "get rich quick" marketing hype. Avoid anything that would strike the reader as simply a cheap ploy to advertise your business. All you need is for **human interest** is a story about real people involved in real events that matter...that's what makes your message interesting to your prospect.

Write a **case history** that illustrates how your program, business, or product **changed someone's life** -- maybe even YOUR life -- for the better.

Section: "People Like Me" Buttons

The Skinny: In this section, you'll learn how to tap into your customer's natural inclination towards a pack mentality. Use your knowledge to change the phrase "Birds of a feather flock together" to "Birds of a feather buy more birdseed."

When we see another a person with whom we identify DO something -- whatever that something might happen to be...like BUYING something -- we all have what I call the "Monkey" response

Monkey See...Monkey Do Monkey Buys the Same as You

This phenomenon explains why television producers use a laugh track after a joke -- or what the writer's thought was a joke -- is delivered during a sitcom. The audience at home knows that the laugh track is just a recording, but that doesn't stop them from chuckling along when the recorded laughter "cues" them.

In the 1980's, Jay Tarses created the television series *The Days and Nights of Molly Dodd*. The series, the first-ever produced without a laugh track, was ground-breaking. It was also cancelled. The audience wasn't sure if the episodes were funny or dramatic. They didn't have the laugh track -- the sound of "people like me" -- to guide them.

Food for Thought - Me-Too-ism

For most of us, agreeing with others is **more comfortable** than going our own way.

People Like Me

Even more magnetic than simply "someone" doing "it" is seeing "someone like me" doing "it." People like to hear about and do what other people just like them are doing -- for business AND for pleasure. Social proof is especially effective when it comes from **people we identify with or want to emulate**.

There isn't anything more persuasive than sending a letter to a heart surgeon that has five other heart surgeons attesting to the benefits of a product or service. When Dr. Phil reads that Tony Robbins purchased a hot tub and found it beneficial in relieving the stress and tightness that comes with being a world famous motivator, it's a natural human instinct for Dr. Phil to say, "If it worked for Tony, it will work for me."

Works and phrases like "bestseller" or "our most popular item" serve as your laugh track. With them, you don't have to convince your customer that your product is a winner.

The hidden message -- lots of other people have bought this product -- is **proof enough**....social proof, that is.

Chapter - The Social Proof Button

You don't have to be a teenager to experience peer pressure. People are deeply affected by what others think whether they're young, old, rich, poor, male, or female.

People will visit websites that are on "most-visited" lists, buy cell phones on the "most useful" lists, and spend their movie dollars on "the #1 film in the country." It's because social proof is also related to people's **desire to be in agreement** with "everyone else," and **not have a mistaken belief** about what is true and what is not.

Take a Tip From Me

This tendency is the reason that gourmet coffee shop barrista puts a few \$1 bills in her tip jars at the beginning of the night. It's to simulate tips, of course, but not 25 or 50-cent tips. "Seeding" the tip jar sends the message that \$1 tips is **what "everyone else" is giving.**

And why do you think "snake oil salesmen" seed their audiences with "ringers" who come forward at a specific time to give witness...and donations? It's to get the ball (and the money) rolling.

It's not an accident...it's psychology at work!

DO Ask and DO Tell

Have you ever wondered why the heck huge, successful national brand companies like Nabisco run those contests asking people to write down "Why I like (Name of Product)" in 100 words or less?

Nabisco is one smart cookie of a company. Rather than paying a high-priced advertising agency or research company millions of dollars to develop slogans that *might* appeal to consumers, companies that use contests let the target audience itself express what **definitely appeals to them.**

For the chance of winning prizes, droves of people are willing to go on record as liking the product, giving the company countless glowing testimonials. Companies can confidently roll out headlines based on the benefits and features they know consumers will respond to.

For example:

- 10,000 Consumers Say, "Nabisco cookies taste better"
- "Nabisco Is A Lifesaver" says Ohio Girl Scout troop leader
- "When I want good quality and great value, I buy Nabisco

The contest comments transform into **button-pushers** that connect with a consumer's "Everybody else is doing it so I should be, too" feelings.

Chapter - The Authority Button

We've already established that savvy consumers look at advertising messages with doubt. This can make marketing especially difficult if you have a **start-up product or service** that has not yet built its reputation for quality and service.

But even a Doubting Thomas (or Doubting Debbie) can be persuaded to buy when the advertising message is delivered by a **well-known authority**, or **person of power and influence**.

And you can "borrow" credibility from trusted authorities and experts

When Authorities Talk, Everybody Listens

Most consumers are more than happy to abdicate the tedious process of **informed decision-making** to someone else. They're even willing to do so without carefully considering all the facts.

Without solid information as their guide, consumers turn to messages and suggestions from famous people, especially if those people are experts.

But **expertise is NOT required for authority**. Simple celebrity seems to work just as well.

I'm Not A Doctor, But I Play One on TV

Research shows that the three characteristics most associated with persuasiveness are perceived **authority, honesty, and likeability**. And it's these three characteristics that we're likely to attribute to **celebrities**.

Associating a brand with a top-notch celebrity create **linkages with the star's appeal**, thereby adding refreshing and **new dimensions to your "brand image."**

The use of celebrity advertising is a winning combination of **image-building** and **product marketing**. This phenomenon is reflected in the recent market research finding that 8 out of 10 TV commercials **scoring the highest recall** were those with celebrity appearances.

People remember the messages...and they **believe**.

Section - "Trust" Buttons

The Skinny: In this section, you'll get a handle on how to roll over skepticism, obliterate cynicism, and convince consumers that you're one of the good guys...or gals.

Sales don't just happen by magic. They're the result of a process...one that always includes **establishing trust**. In order to feel comfortable doing business with you, a buyer has to assure themselves that they will get the value they expect. In other words, they want to be sure that you will deliver the goods...and take back the "bads."

Consumers know that products aren't always perfect. It's what will happen IN CASE of a problem that worries them. Your prospect needs to **trust YOU** as the person or business *behind* the product who will **ensure satisfaction**.

Web Trust

In the world of Internet Marketing, several factors play into establishing trust and credibility for websites. (It's easy to see how these factors would be equally important in offline advertising as well. Just substitute the words "website content" with "marketing copy.")

- Is the website content **professional**?
- Is the website content **presented in a clear manner**?
- Is the website content **well-organized** and easy to follow?
- Do the **graphics and design** of your website content distract from the purpose of your message?

It's true that trust is built over time, but establishing trust with web site visitors **doesn't necessarily require a tremendous investment** to yield tremendous results in a relatively short period.

Here are some quick pointers:

- **Display your company contact information prominently on your web site** -- including address and phone number (This legitimizes your business and shows that you exist in real time and space)
- **Give away free stuff** (Discounts, coupons, and trial offers attract visitors to your site and literally keep them coming back for more)
- **Display policies about shipping, returns, online transactions, and information privacy on your site** (This legitimizes your business and gives evidence of your commitment to your customer's well- being)

Chapter - The "Oops, I Did It Again" Button

I know you. You want to look good, so you figure it's better to be mysterious about what goes on "behind closed doors" at your business. But perhaps you should take a tip from Britney Spears, the original "I did it again" girl.

Britney may not know much, but she sure knows that **admitting a mistake** makes you human and **trustworthy**. As a matter of fact, telling people the **REASON** why you're doing something is one of the most powerful influencers of human behavior.

Let's face it...if you're making a special offer -- a 50%-off tire sale, a "Buy one, get one free" shoe deal, or a year of complimentary pool cleaning -- nobody thinks you're doing it just because you're Mr. Good Guy or Ms. Sweetie Pie.

In fact, your **generosity is likely to make people suspicious**. "That low-cost DVD player is probably factory-serviced," they'll say to themselves. Or "I bet that early-bird-special-until-midnight diner was cited by the board of health."

If you don't tell people what's going on, they'll make up stories in their head and chances are they won't be flattering to you or your offer. Again, don't take it personally, it's just human nature -- after decades of false advertising.

Let the Sun Shine In

Instead of trying to cover up the truth or put a happy face on your sad story...let people pull back the curtain and take a long, hard look at you and at your company.

You don't have anything to hide...so don't act as though you do!

Let's say August is traditionally your worst time to make sales and you're desperate to increase your business during this period to help your cash flow. Make **a special, limited time offer**.

Don't be coy. Offer a special discount or freebie and say you're doing so **because it's your "slow time"** and you need to pay your staff anyway.

- The Order Department Fouled Up - Our customers wanted the Widget X25 mountain bike, but Dennis in our ordering department ordered the X26 and now we're over-stocked.
- Where There's Smoke, There's A Sale - The fire in our warehouse damaged a lot of our merchandise, so we're selling the good stuff for less to help; us re-stock.

- Around-the-World in 80 Days Sale - I'm lowering my rates to raise cash to send my parents on an around the world cruise for their 50th anniversary.

I know this probably goes against every grain of business sense, but I promise if you **give people a good, believable reason** why you're doing what you're doing, they'll love you for it. If you open up, they will, too -- with open arms...and open wallets

Tell Me Why

People want to have the reason for what you do and they like to have **a reason for what they do, too.**

Food for Thought - Ivy League Thinking

In a Harvard University psychology experiment, a test participant approached unsuspecting people waiting in line to use copier and made a request.

One request was: "Excuse me. I only have five pages. May I use the Xerox machine?" Another request was phrased: "Excuse me. I only have five pages. May I use the Xerox machine because I'm in a rush?" In a third situation, the participant said, "Excuse me, I have five pages. May I use the Xerox machine because I have to make some copies?" There was no reason given for the need ...just the words "because".

Request #1 was granted 60% of the time. Request #2, the request coupled with a reason, was successful 94% of the time. But here's the clincher: Believe it or not (and you'd better!): **93% of the people said yes simply due to the word 'BECAUSE'!**

It didn't matter that there was no reason given for the request. Just using **the magic word "because"** triggered the desired response -- allowing the test participant to cut in line.

"Because" will have the same effect on your desired response -- it will make your customers buy, buy, and then buy some more!

Chapter - The "Common Ground" Button

If you offer products that people truly want; and solve problems that truly bother them, there's only one more element you need to add to guarantee your success: **rapport**.

When you establish rapport, you say, "I understand you." To establish this essential relationship, you need to talk to consumers in **the same language** they use when they talk to each other....that you're on "common ground."

Parlez Vous "Me"?

Russians speak Russian, Italians speak Italian, and Americans (despite what the Brits say) speak English..."American" English. Gas jockeys speak the language of the pump and stock brokers use the language of Wall Street even when they're not on the trading floor.

Consumers speak different languages, too. They speak the dialects of a thousand tiny sub-cultures...languages related to their jobs, their hometown, their cultures, hobbies, and passions. If you speak a consumer's language, in other words, if you can **identify the buzzwords** of the sub-culture, you can immediately sound like an insider who's in the know, instead of an outsider trying to make a sale.

Friends Don't Let Friends Make Bad Decisions (or Drive Drunk)

People trust their friends to give them guidance and advice that's in their best interest. They're suspicious of people who are trying to sell them things and consider their advice "tainted" by the quest for the almighty dollar.

Business "friends" form a friendly, relationship based on **mutual trust and common interest**. Business friends have "rapport." If you can position yourself as a buyer's **trusted and knowledgeable advisor** rather than a one-step-up-from-the-liars'-pit salesperson, you'll be offering sound "advice" not a questionable "hard sell."

So just how do you establish rapport? Do your best to **mirror what you observe**.

- Is the prospect **formal or friendly**?
- Is his/her speaking voice **loud or soft**?
- Is the energy he/she gives off **fast-paced or methodical**?

Establishing rapport requires sensitivity. Remember a brief joke can do more for buyer rapport than 20 minutes worth of sales talk, *unless* the buyer is a serious sort who finds humor a "time waster."

But Enough About Me...What Do YOU Think (About Me)?

In making a connection and establishing rapport, it's helpful if you can find something besides business to discuss. Most people share a **favorite topic of conversation**: themselves.

People love to talk about themselves and they reveal quite a bit when they do. You'll immediately get some insight into their mood, personality, and conversational style.

Food For Thought - Fact-Finding Missions

The information you learn about hobbies, pets, children and favorite vacation spots are **the foundation** for rapport and the beginning of a long, beautiful relationship...and a big, fat sale!

Chapter - The "Unique" Button

The unique quality of a product or service is the major reason that people buy from you instead of the guys down the block. So if you do something that sets you apart from your competition the marketplace...if you make a better widget, a cheaper, widget, or can deliver a piping, hot Widget Pizza in 20 minutes or less guaranteed...don't keep it a secret.

Tell the world how special you are!
(The world will want to get to know you)

Once your company has identified its uniqueness, it will be the key message communicated in everything you do. Your uniqueness will be distilled down to an essential phrase -- sometimes referred to as a **unique selling position** or **unique sales proposition** by marketing smarties (and a slogan or motto by everyone else).

Your USP morphs into headlines for all of your ads, letters, brochures, TV, and radio messages. It's on the tip of your tongue whenever you're talking sales-talk, ready to make an impression on a potential customer when the time is right. It's the first thing you think of when you open your business eyes in the morning and the last thing you think of when you close your office door at night.

They're Good, But We're Better

Who's better, you or "Brand X"? You should know your competitor so well that when you ask a prospective customer, "What other widgets have you been looking at?" you'll be able to respond to your prospect's answer by sharing specific details about that product or service and why selecting your widget is a better choice.

Talking about the competition is a good time to accentuate the positive. Instead of trashing your competitor's business, explain that your competitor (or competitor's product) is *good enough*, but that yours provides SUPERIOR value. The less your comments sound like someone simply trying to do a hatchet job on "Brand X," the more trust and confidence your customer will have in you and your advice.

Since winning the hearts and mind (trust and confidence) of a prospect is half the battle in sales, you'll be well on your way to a big win.

Food for Thought - Say It to Claim It

Even if you do many things the same way your competitors do, the benefit you point to may be unique to a prospect because **your competition doesn't mention it.**

Section: Conclusion

Congratulations!

You've done it. You've learned the first lessons in a "life course" that could spell the difference between being a marketer of moderate success and a monster marketer who earns millions and "retires" for life at age 35.

With the stiff competition of a shrinking global marketplace, you must find ways to set yourself apart from the rest. Learning "hot button" marketing practices and principles will help you to weather the storm and create compelling sales messages that **bring new customers to your door and old customers back for return purchases.**

Now don't get cocky. And don't think your studies are complete. You're not an expert yet...and neither am I, for that matter.

Successful marketing is a "continuing education" program. Although I am certainly a master in my field, one of the most successful, highly paid professionals out there, like the greatest achievers in any field, I know that **there's always more to learn.**

And speaking of more...just keep reading because there's more in store in the special Bonus sections of this ebook. You'll find **tools and reports** on the marketing topics you care the most about.

Read them, enjoy them, and use them to grow rich!

Best wishes for success.

Bonus #1 - 3 Killer Conversion Strategies

Killer Strategy #1 - Small Commitments Elicit a "yes" to something small and build to a big sale

You know the expression "Pennies make dollars." It means that small things can turn into big things. This is exactly what happens when your sales message asks a prospect to make a series of small, easy commitments.

One yes can lead to another and then another and then another...until before the consumer realizes what's happened, he/she has said YES! to your product or service.

People often find it easier to agree to small details than to say "Yes" to a large commitment. Capitalize on this tendency by leading your potential customer through a series of small, painless "yes" steps before closing in for the "kill" -- your ultimate sale.

Instead of asking a customer to commit to a purchase, you ask them a peripheral question that's designed to get the "Yes" ball rolling. Then you build on that yes with more yeses until you've got a **commitment to buy**. This is sometimes called the **Incremental Close**

Let's say you're a Widget Air Conditioner Salesperson. Here are

- "Are you trying to beat the summer heat?"
- "Would you like to have an air conditioner delivered immediately?"
- "Would you be interested in an air conditioner that comes with free installation?"

Every time a consumer says "yes" to a benefit that the salesperson is describing, he/she begins to build a mental picture of already having the product and begins to experience the positive emotions of owning the product.

Yes, In Theory

Another way to get commitment is with an "If I would, would you..." situation. With this tactic, the prospect is only asked to make a **theoretical** "yes" to your offer, so it's very, very easy to agree. As with the Incremental Close, every "yes" is another link in the chain...another small "push" towards the finish line up ahead and the checkered flag that says, "Sold!"

Killer Conversion Strategy #2 - Repetition Once is NOT Enough

If a prospect doesn't respond to your offer, do you say to yourself, "What's the point of following up? If they didn't buy immediately, they're obviously not interested or they're not really serious. Those types are just a waste of our time!"

What are you thinking!!! There are a variety of reasons why prospects don't buy from you initially and only one may be that they're not interested in what you have to offer.

- They may **not be ready...yet.**
- They may need **more information.**
- They may still be **researching other vendors.**
- They have to **save the money** to make the purchase

Maybe they're just plain worn out from being "pitched".

Thanks to the folks that developed "captive audience advertising," you'll see sales messages on gas pumps, at the airport, online at the supermarket and...in public restrooms! That means there's almost no time during the day when a consumer isn't being sold something by someone.

In fact, according to some studies, **the average consumer sees 3,000 marketing messages every day.**

So what can you do? Is it possible for your message to compete with all that 'noise'? Yes! The best way to get a consumer to tune out the competition is **to turn up the volume** of your offer.

And the way to do that is with **frequency** and a series of messages....that arrive at **strategically timed intervals.**

Why "strategically timed"? There's **a fine line that separates frequent contact from annoying overkill.** Sometimes on latenight TV, an advertiser will buy time and drop in the same 15-second spot at every commercial break during the program. By the 9th time you've heard the pitchman say, "Do you want to earn a million dollars?" you're screaming "No" back at the screen and ready to take a vow of poverty.

Make sure that you vary your contact methods and your message so that you come down on the right side of the line.

Food for Thought: The Power of Nine

Statistically, you'll need to contact and then **follow up with prospects nine times** before they buy from you.

Killer Conversion Strategy #3 - Honesty

Get real to make a deal

In order for your sales message to be heard, you need to establish trust and "disarm" a consumer's built-in skepticism about advertising and marketing claims. That skepticism...cynicism in many consumers...can completely derail your ability to make the sale, so it's your job to overcome it.

The best way to accomplish your goal is with **good, old-fashioned honesty**. Once you've established that you're speaking honestly with them, they're likely to give the rest of your message a bit more attention than usual...and be a little more open to it.

The Do's and Don'ts of Honesty

Honesty is a way to make a sale and an important way to build your reputation, and you'll see what you reap if you try to cheat people. If you pull the wool over a consumer's eyes, don't think for a minute that he/she won't spread the word -- the negative word -- about you and your business.

Being honest doesn't mean revealing secrets about your product's flaws or focusing on shortcomings in your service. It DOES mean toning down the over-the-top language of sales

"With Widget walking shoes, you could go from New York to Boston and never need to sit down."

and conveying the benefits your product has to offer in more believable terms.

"Widget walking shoes provide support and long-lasting comfort so you won't have to rest your feet as often."

When you speak honestly, you sound less like a high-pressure sales "machine" and more like a real person...and wouldn't *you* rather buy from a person? Well, your customer would, too!

Food for Thought: Speak the Truth

By admitting honestly that your product is **not the perfect solution for everyone**, you increase the chances that the prospect will listen to why your product is perfect for THEM.

This theory is frequently used in the promotion of weight-loss products: "Our diet supplement is too powerful and too expensive for someone with just a few pounds to lose" says to someone who's extremely obese, "We mean YOU."

Bonus #2 - How to Market with Postcards

Admit it. When you sift through your day's mail, what's the first thing you do? Even before you start sorting your mail and dumping it into the round file, you look at your postcards.

Why? Because they're easy to see.

The postcard immediately gets your undivided attention, at least for several moments. Most of the time, that's more than regular direct mail gets.

As humans, we are naturally curious. If the graphic or headline grabs you, you'll want to read everything it has to say, so flipping over a postcard to see what's on the other side is **a natural thing to do**.

For ROI (return on investment), postcards have by far the highest return

Postcards don't require your prospect to open an envelope, unfold a letter and read a long page of writing to decide if the message is interesting or relevant. Perhaps the greatest single benefit of the postcard format is its ability to get **the maximum number of people to actually read your offer**.

Postcard prospecting is **economical and effective**. The humble little postcard is the ultimate cost-saving weapon because of its ability to **cut through the marketing clutter** and **preserve your bottom line** when compared to other marketing vehicles.

Anatomy of a Postcard

The Billboard Side

The billboard side of your postcard is the **attention-getting** side. It is the side that usually **displays the graphic**. On the billboard side it's important to have an **attention-grabbing headline** that says, "Read me!"

- **Billboard Side Headline** - Limit your text to 6 or 7 high-impact words
- **Billboard Transition** – Include a short transition phrase on the billboard side -- especially one with a series of dots -- entices the reader to turn the postcard over to get the rest of the message. For example:

**The secret to a life of easy income is...
After a long hard day, wouldn't you like to...
Falling asleep has been easier now that ...**

The Face Side

The face side of a postcard is the side where the postage stamp is affixed. It is considered the “front” of the postcard by the postal service. This is also your **prime selling space**.

- **Face Headline** –Your face headline may either continue your billboard headline or stand by itself. When your prospects turn to the face of the postcard, they should be impacted with information that supports the main benefit offered.
- **Face Graphic** – If you billboard side has just words then you may consider putting a graphic on the face side. Remember, the idea with a postcard is to associate an image with an idea. Your graphic should reinforce your billboard message.

Graphics

Use the same guidelines for using graphics that you would in any advertisement:

- Use **photographs instead of illustrations**. People trust pictures more than drawings.
- Show **a picture of your target audience**. When targeting women, use photos of women. When targeting men, use men in your photos
- **Action pictures** are very effective. If your product a hot tub, show people frolicking in one.
- **Show the benefit**. If your mattress provides superior rest, show a person sleeping peacefully
- Show a **before-and-after story**. This is often used with weight loss
- Leaving **white space** allows your reader’s eyes to rest, which makes reading the text a pleasant experience. Try leaving extra space around your headline, using wider margins around the edges of the message and between columns.

Body Copy

Your body copy is used to describe your offer and its benefits. You don’t get much real estate on the face of your postcard so every line is critical. Make sure that every word is attention-getting or provocative.

Call-To-Action / Closing

A postcard doesn't make the sale. It motivates the consumer to take the next step on the sales journey, and that's to contact you. Examples of calls-to-action include:

“Phone our toll-free number now! xxx-xxx-xxxx”
“Go to www.InfoDog.com now for your free report!”
“Come to our store before Friday and enter to win...”

Special Symbols

Some postcards may contain attention-drawing bulleted or checkmark-ed lists to point out benefits. Other postcards include sidebars -- small boxes or colored areas that highlight a special bonus or important information.

The Step-by-Step Guide to Postcard Success

The next time you pick up a postcard, be aware of the process the marketer is trying to make your go through as you review it.

- An **interesting graphic** catches your eye
- The graphic then leads your eye to the **transition copy**.
- The transition copy compels you to look at the **face side of the postcard**.
- The face side carries **headline copy** so compelling that you immediately move along to the body copy.
- The **opening paragraph** is so intriguing that you want to read the entire benefit-rich body copy.
- The total impact of the postcard is so profound that the deal is closed and you want to "Call Now" to "Buy Now."

If at First You Don't Succeed...

The **likelihood of a response** to direct mailing increases as the prospect continues to be exposed to your message. You should consider sending a **series of postcards** that trail each other every few days to make an impression on your prospect.

Each postcard should be “linked” to the previous message in some way. You might simply continue your conversation with your prospect on each postcard.

Although direct mail marketers generally recommend up to seven messages, with postcards, a **series of 3-5** should be enough prodding to draw interest and motivate your prospect to take action.

Rules and Regulations

Your postcard won't do you a bit of good if it's **returned to sender** due to insufficient postage. And your postcard won't save you money if it can't go for reduced postcard rates.

An **oversize postcard** will mail at a higher rate than a standard postcard. Don't undertake a postcard-campaign to save money and then blow it by using an outsized mailer. Remember:

- A **standard 4" x 6" index card** can be mailed at the postcard rate, but a 3" x 5" card cannot (below minimum).
- A **standard 8.5" x 11" sheet of index stock paper** cut into four equal pieces will produce four 4.25" x 5.5" postcards which qualify for reduced postcard postage rates.

The only **regulations** you really need to know about postcards concern **size, paper thickness, and paper color.**

- **Minimum size** for a postcard is 3.5' inches high and 5 inches long.
- **Maximum size** is 4.25' high by 6 inches long.
- **Minimum paper thickness** is .007 inches
- **Maximum thickness** is .016 inches.

To make is easy, use paper designated as **60-lb. card stock**

Postal regulations prohibit using "brilliant colors", which means **no fluorescent pinks, yellows, oranges etc.**

Okay, you're set. Now get out there are post those cards!

Bonus #3 : 104 Consumer Magnets

Use these words carefully, but liberally! They'll **drive consumers wild with desire** and catapult them into action...BUYING action.

Absolutely	Amazing	Attractive	Action
Bold	Breakthrough	Boost	Banish
Challenge	Crazy	Conquer	Confused
Discount	Dazzling	Deluxe	Dynamic
Discouraged	Disgusted	Disbelieving	Dream
Exclusive	Exceptional	Expert	Explosive
Eager	Empathetic	Envious	Evil
Exceptional	Eye-catching	Famous	Faster
Freedom	Failure	Fear	Feel
Genuine	Guilty	Huge	Hurry
Hopeless	Imagine	Important	Income
Impulsive	Idiotic	Inert	Intimidated
Instant	Innovative	Jealous	Jam-packed
Love	Latest	Largest	Lowest
Negative	Nervous	Notice	Notorious
Outrageous	Pain	Popular	Powerful
Proven	Practical	Picture	Puzzled
Rare	Reduce	Relax	Relieve
Reveal	Revolutionary	Sad	Satisfied
Save	See	Shocked	Sense
Sizzling	Smart	Skyrocket	Sensational
Simple	Sophisticated	Startling	Strong
Surprise	Stop	Success	System
Troubled	Truth	Tremendous	Top
Trick	Ugly	Unalloyed	Unusual
Unconditional	Ultimate	Unlimited	Visualize

BONUS #4 - Meet the Release

Do you know how to talk to the media? Sure you can pick up a phone, but if you really want to make the media sit up and take notice, you need to communicate with reporters the way they like best...with **press releases**.

There are **several types of releases**, including:

- **An executive-appointment release** announcing the appointment of someone to a new position.
- **Community involvement releases** that report sponsorship of events or get-togethers.
- **Industry forecasts** that offer industry surveys and projections and prognosticate where your industry is going
- **Topical news release relating to trend or trends.**

The media is particularly interested in certain trends, and your products and services -- no matter what they are, can tie into one of those trends.

Basic training

With a simple press release, you can entice print or broadcast media to spread the word about your business. However, unlike advertising, you can't buy publicity, you have to earn it. You have to provide a compelling answer to the all-important question of an editor or producer:

Why would our readers or listeners be interested in you NOW?

A press release must contain four basic facts: **Who, What, When and Where**. It should be so well-written, so media-friendly, so absolutely prêt-a-porter (ready to wear) that an editor needs to do nothing more than say, "Print it!"

To accomplish that, **follow these rules** when sending out a "hardcopy" release:

- **Double-spaced.**
- **No typographical errors.**
- **Have the copies run off professionally**
- **Use white paper.** .
- **Use black ink**
- **Include a dateline.**
- **List a contact person with a phone number.**
- **Avoid hype.** Editors only want the facts.

The Press Does Not Owe You Anything!

The media makes a living by providing valuable news and information to its audience. Newspaper editors and TV's managing editors are bombarded every day with news releases from all over the world that they have read, review, and consider for inclusion...consider for their readership.

Some small business owners believe that if they write a press release that is newsworthy that there is an **obligation** on the part of the newspaper to publish it. Not only is this not true, but this kind of attitude can be detrimental to obtaining the coverage that you want.

The media is not an extension of your marketing department. But, if you are fortunate and savvy enough to have information of value that their readers may be interested in, you will at least attract their attention. Editors are not ad sales people. They're journalists and they take pride in delivering **unbiased coverage** independent of outside influences.

That said, many "hometown" papers will accept a "trade" for an advertising commitment -- they'll print your release if you buy their ads. Take advantage of this practice as much as you can, just be careful not to approach the legitimate press with any type of bartering proposal. It may destroy your chances of getting your releases accepted now *and* in the future.

You Must Generate Real News

Generating news and information that people and the press will be interested in is not as difficult as it may sound. All you have to do is ask the question, "What does my target audience care about?" Asking this question will help to focus your thoughts and ideas. Conducting some research on a specific topic or question will help you get the answer.

Another easy way to develop content for your press release is to create a "**swipe file**" of related news articles. A swipe file is collection of **other people's creative work** whether it's news articles, newspaper and magazine ads or direct mailings. Use your swipe file for is to get your creative juices flowing. I call this method "**creative inspiration.**"

Don't limit your swipe file to items related to your industry. Put any ad or direct mail piece in your swipe file that jumps out at you and catches your attention. Even if you just find words that you like, or an image that hits you -- put it in there. On the other hand,

Save the best pieces for your swipe file. You can also consider creating a "**Stinker File**" for all the really bad ads you see.

Know How You're Going to Handle the Reponses

Don't send in a press release until you know how you're going to handle the responses. What if your press release is a hit and you get over 1,000 responses? Who at your company talks to the press? Do you know how to handle 1,000+ requests for information? This would be a good problem, but it's still a problem in need of a solution.

Reporters and consumers live in a deadline-oriented world -- they don't want to wait for your response, they want it now! Make it a practice to respond to press-generated inquiries in 24 hours or less. You'd better strike while they're hot for you because they cool down incredibly fast.

A press release campaign provides incredibly effective image advertising for your business or profession. It's practically free it's the way that small to medium-sized businesses can do big-sized image advertising without incurring the giant-sized expense of media advertising.

As you send out more and more releases, getting more and more accomplished with each new effort, your community will become more and more aware of your services and you can generate prospective clients.

People spend years honing their skills in this area, so you'll need to invest a little time and effort to get it right. But here's the good news --

**Public relations literally allows you to
EARN WHILE YOU LEARN.**