

Secrets of Copy That Really Closes Sales



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Report 4 of 6



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Secrets of Copy That Really Closes Sales – Special Report 4 of 6:

“Why copy doesn't convert and what you can do about it”

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When this happens, it'll break your heart: You put blood, sweat and tears into writing a sales letter Web site, or an ad, or a direct mail sales letter... and when all is said and done, you get zero sales.

The worst part: You think you did everything right, and you don't have a clue as to why your copy failed. Not only that, but no one can tell you why.

But I will. First of all, it might not be your copy.

The five reasons besides copy –that most other people don't know about, or simply don't want to tell you about – are:

- You're trying to sell something that nobody wants to buy, and wouldn't buy even if you had the best copy in the world. (That's a more common problem than you would think.)
- You're trying to sell something some prospects would buy, but you're not getting your copy in front of those prospects. Either nobody is seeing your copy, or, you're getting it in front of a target market that's 100% wrong for what you're offering. (Also more common than you would think.)
- People want what you have, but your price is higher than they would ever pay, or your price is so low that people worry the value's not there.
- People can't figure out how to order (yes, this happens a lot).
- Mechanical problems: broken links, shopping cart doesn't work, merchant account doesn't work, Web hosting server is down, phone number is incorrect, people can't find your store.

Those are the main reasons other than copy that you won't get any sales. But, putting those aside, many people have everything else in good working order, but simply blow it when it comes to creating copy that closes sales.

Zero sales — here's what was wrong with the copy

Recently I was interviewed on a teleseminar, and the teleseminar host asked me in advance to go to my subscriber list and look for volunteers who had Web pages that weren't converting. I was to choose one of the entries and critique the copy live, on the teleseminar.

I got a lot of worthwhile entries, but one brave soul's Web page really stood out.

He was getting pay-per-click traffic to his site, but he hadn't closed a single sale.

His copy — on the surface — was better than most I'd seen, but as I looked deeper I saw he made a lot of typical mistakes that almost guarantee no sales.

His product was an ebook on how to treat young children's ear infections. Here are three main things I saw that was preventing him from getting any orders:

1. The words on the title bar (the blue line at the very top of your Web browser, with the words in white letters) did not match the words in his headline. This lack of congruency right at the start creates suspicion and leads to immediate distrust, which, of course, cannot occur when you want to make a sale.

The words in the title bar: **Cure Your Ear Infection**

The headline: "**How a Concerned Dad Relieved His Daughter's Chronic Ear Infections Without Antibiotics!**"

The problem: Cure Your Ear Infection -- refers to an infection in the parents' ears.

"How a Concerned Dad Relieved His Daughter's Chronic Ear Infections Without Antibiotics!" -- refers to a child's ear infection.

Right away, something is out of kilter. A question likely to rumble through the prospect's mind:

If this guy doesn't even know which ear infection he's talking about, how can I possibly believe the information he's selling will actually work... and how can I feel safe using it with something as precious as my child's health?

2. The headline doesn't talk about what's on most parents' minds. At first glance, you would think it does: "How a Concerned Dad Relieved His Daughter's Chronic Ear Infections Without Antibiotics!"

But a little basic research I did, proved otherwise. It turns out that as much as people worry about antibiotics in general, there were zero searches recorded in inventory.overture.com (which is a pretty reliable microcosm of what people search for) for terms relating to children's ear infections, and curing them without antibiotics, all in the same search.

That means this specific combination of worries was largely not on people's minds during the month these searches were recorded.

So the headline didn't strike a chord with readers. And doing so is vitally important. Because if you don't have 'em at "hello" (the headline), you've made a lot of extra work to do for yourself in your copy, just to get them back the curious and open state where you should have had them before they read your headline.

What's on your mind isn't necessarily what's worrying your market

I didn't talk with the man who wrote the copy, but my guess is that he was very concerned about using antibiotics for his child's ear infection, and he generalized his concern to others (without any proof that others were really interested) and then tried to make a business of it. This is business suicide.

And it happens all the time. Which is one reason over 80% of new businesses fail.

I have some friends who were in an eight-person business startup that flopped miserably. It turned out that the stated reason they told the world for the business was just a cover story. The real reason it had been created was that a woman's husband couldn't get enough work. So she tried to create a business that included a national network to help other people in her husband's field get clients. But the whole premise of the business was faulty to begin with. So the business failed and the woman's husband still didn't have enough clients.

What she should have done was market for her husband to get him more clients; or have him learn to market himself better; or get him some help to market his business. But instead of facing the problem directly, she decided to try to be a hero and save the world for all the people in his profession. As a result, the half-dozen other people in the business that failed (besides the woman and her husband) got to share the couple's suffering.

The important thing to remember from this is: You always want to make sure your market really wants what you think they should want, or assume they really do want, before you roll out a product. Otherwise, you could fall prey to reason number one at the top of this Special Report (you're trying to sell something nobody wants to buy).

And your headline needs to hit the bull's-eye for what is really foremost on your prospects' minds.

3. The copy doesn't back up what was promised in the headline – and it doesn't make a credible case for the product as a whole.

After you make a claim or a promise, you need to present an argument in your copy to prove to your prospects, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that what you say is true.

Listen to the words of one of the winningest lawyers in America, Gerry Spence, from his landmark book "How to Argue and Win Every Time":

"But if we do not prepare, if we do not know, the only alternative is to fake it or admit we don't know. Those who peddle bullshit (there is no more descriptive word for it) are fixtures of American society... [The bullshit artist] is sometimes accepted, sometimes adored... but not for long. He is always exposed, and in the end he can win no arguments."

But the ear infection guy wasn't trying to "pull a fast one"

One thing I want to make clear: I don't believe the copywriter who's selling the book about ear infections is a bullshit artist. I believe he is sincere. I think he made a mistake in choosing the antibiotic angle for his headline; I believe with a new headline he could still sell a lot of ebooks.

But once he has a headline that works, he has to overcome another problem in the copy. And that is the problem of providing proof.

See, in his original copy, he did not fulfill the promise of his headline. He didn't show how to cure earaches without antibiotics. What is worse, he didn't lay out all the important facts. So in the marketplace at large, it doesn't really matter that I think he is sincere. To his prospects, the writer came across like a bullshit artist, and they didn't take him at his word.

So nobody bought.

What did he do wrong, or fail to do?

First, he never spelled out what he was able to do to cure his daughter's ear infection without using antibiotics. Second, he didn't say in any clear way what the difference is for his daughter as a result of his research. Does she have fewer ear infections? Can he cure some of them himself? Does he have a new litmus test as to whether to take her to the doctor or use a home remedy? You can't tell by reading his copy.

Third, though he claimed he did a lot of research, he never said specifically and in detail what research he did.

This is laziness, plain and simple. Not research laziness – my experience and intuition tell me he probably did his homework, and a lot of it, in that regard. I'm talking about copywriting laziness. He failed to recognize the reality that people need to know, in compelling, dramatic detail, the trouble you've gone to in order to trust you. I accuse him of copywriting laziness because he didn't do that in his copy.

He never demonstrated enough specific, relevant knowledge about childhood ear infections to show that he was a learned authority, a reliable expert, a viable provider of solutions to anxious and troubled parents worried about their screaming, suffering little ones.

Worst of all, his testimonials he used in his copy never stated that the information in his ebook worked. Each testimonial raved about what a good job the writer had done collecting information.

Big deal! Parents with screaming children don't care if other people give the writer an "A" on his ear infection report! They're not going to lay their money down for that. They need to know that the information works.

And there's not a scintilla of proof of that in the entire sales letter.

Now – what about you?

It's simple. Don't make these sales-killing mistakes yourself. Do your homework, and most important, spell out what you did to develop your valuable product in an interesting, concise, convincing and reassuring way.

★So the fourth lesson of copy that really sells is: Sell people what they want. Be rigorously consistent in your message. And fully prove what you promise is true.

Coming in **Special Report 5**, tomorrow: 3 rules for making a fortune with a sales letter, ad or Web site... the secrets (including a three-part method) for coming up with benefits that glue people's eyeballs to your copy until they're ready to pull out their credit cards... a simple 4-point formula for getting the best testimonials you ever saw... and, the shocking truth about providing guarantees! See you tomorrow.

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