

# Secrets of Copy That Really Closes Sales



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**Report 5 of 6**



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# Secrets of Copy That Really Closes Sales – Special Report 5 of 6:

**“Secrets of copy that converts like crazy!”**

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**H**ow do you create a Web site, sales letter or ad that converts like crazy?  
It seems like it's the best-kept secret in the world... but... it's no secret at all.

The information is out there. The problem most people have is, they know vaguely what to do, but they don't know how to do it.

I'm going to share five steps here that, if you follow all five of them, will almost certainly improve your response and very well could create a huge payday for you with your copy!

Before I do, let's review a few key points of warning from the last section of this report:

- **You can't have a big payday unless you are selling something people want.** Knowing what they want, and will buy, eventually requires a working understanding of human nature. The biggest mistake most people make is trying to sell people something they think they should want, instead of finding out what they really do want and selling that instead. The easiest way to get this sense is to look at what people are already buying. There are formulas, checklists, eternal truths and shortcuts to knowing what people want, but you can't beat marketplace statistics and results for the most direct information about what sells.
- **You must get your copy in front of the people who want what you sell.** This sounds overly simplistic, but it's vitally important and frequently misunderstood. The old cliché is, "Don't try to sell steak to vegetarians." The rule of the road is: Get very clear and specific on who your ideal, target prospect is. Then, do everything you can to get your copy in front of that kind of person. Don't waste any effort, time or money putting your copy in front of anyone else.
- **Once your copy is in front of your target market, be prepared to do business.** Mentally, for sure. But also mechanically. Everything needs to be in place to take orders, to collect money, to keep your Web site functioning properly, and all the other nitty-gritty details of business. You can have all the customers in the world who want to buy from you but if they can't physically order from you, then

it's all for nothing. Be a fanatic about the details of doing business... it's more than worth the effort!

Okay. Now let's look at the five things people who write over-achieving sales letters, ads, and other forms of copy have in common:

**1. They know exactly what's on their customer's minds and they speak to it directly.**

Twenty-six centuries ago or so, somebody inscribed the words "Know Thyself" (in Greek) on the Oracle of Apollo at Delphi. No one knows for sure who said it first, but historians believe it was a wise man named Solon of Athens.

Hey, it's good advice for living life. It's not bad advice for a copywriter. But it's not nearly as important as this advice when you want to write copy that racks up the big sales:

***"Know Thy Customer."***

I'm sure you've heard that before, but have you ever stopped to consider what it really means? Whenever I have worked with a hard-charging entrepreneur who later goes on to make millions with copy, we always focus on that question a lot. Michel Fortin does, and as you may remember, he wrote the first entrepreneurial sales letter to chalk up over \$1 million in sales in one day (for John Reese's "Traffic Secrets" course).

Dr. Harlan Kilstein focuses hard on this question, as does Mike Morgan. And so does every other highly successful copywriter I know.

Knowing your customer means knowing what they don't like as much as what they do. What I'm about to tell you may shock you, but it didn't shock me. I was once marketing to a crowd of conservative Christians and I was told by a joint venture partner, in no uncertain terms, that I was not to use the word "evolution," even if I was referring to something entirely unrelated to the Darwinism/Creationism argument.

Why? Because that word had such a negative connotation to people in this market that it was just a good idea to avoid using it entirely.

So I made sure not to use the word in my copy. It wasn't a moral, philosophical, or religious decision on my part. It was just common courtesy and good business.

Knowing your customer also means knowing about their positive hot buttons as well. I'm working with a client right now whose market is entrepreneurs. Most people who aren't entrepreneurs think that making money is the main reason entrepreneurs go into business for themselves. But those who know the market well know that, while money is important to this group, freedom and control are much higher values.

Knowing that would change how you would write a sales letter, wouldn't it?

Instead of talking about how much money a prospect could make, you might mention that top-of-the-heap doctors and lawyers often make over a million dollars a year... but, they have little or no control over their time, and they lack the personal freedom of a successful entrepreneur. You might say, ***“How would you like to out-earn 99% of all doctors and lawyers and have a lifestyle they would be sorely envious of...”*** ...Do you see where I'm going with this?

You could only write a letter that would strike such a powerful chord with the entrepreneurial market (by hitting their top two values) if you knew the market really well.

## **2. They spell out in compelling benefits what the product will do for the customer.**

Here's a little memory-jogger to help you find these benefits: A-I-R:

- Ask
- Imagine
- Remember

One by one:

**Method 1: Ask** - When Michel Fortin writes a sales letter, he will call up customers who have already used the product and ask them specifically what the product is doing for them. He seeks the most passionate, evangelical customers he can find, and, with their permission, records the conversation over the phone. Then he gets the call transcribed and looks for the specific language the customer uses.

It sounds simple, but it's a brilliant strategy. What Michel does when he conducts these interviews goes far beyond getting a testimonial. The excited language of a passionate customer not only gives you words you can use directly in the copy, it also gives you deep insight into the thinking and feeling of the kind of customer you want more of. And as you talk to several customers, you start to see similar themes or words that pop up again and again. These are things you want to emphasize in your copy.

**Method 2: Imagine** - Knowing your customer means understanding what their life is like - what they want more of, what they want less of, how they would like their life to be different, what annoys them, what thrills them. Mentally put yourself in their world and imagine what difference the product would make for them:

- What would they be able to do that they can't do now?
- What problems would become smaller or disappear altogether?
- What would they be able to do more quickly or more easily?
- How would other people see them differently – how would they end up being more respected or admired?
- How would they make more money as a result of what the product does for them?
- How would the product save them money?

Getting into detailed specific answers to these questions, even in your imagination, will help you build powerful benefit statements you can use as headlines, subhead lines, and bullet points and even in your guarantee.

**Method 3: Remember** - Your own personal experience, and what you have observed about others, are powerful tools for writing great benefit copy.

Think back. If you're using the product now, what was your life like before you had the product? What problem did you have that went away? Now that you're using the product, what can you do that you couldn't do before? In what specific ways is your life better as a result of using the product?

The same questions will get you valuable answers when you think of people you know personally who have used this product. You can simply make two lists. Call the first one "Before," and the second one "After." Put specific, nitty-gritty details on each list. As you see the comparisons, product benefits will start to form in your mind.

All three of these methods — Ask, Imagine, and Remember — will get you benefits that are superior to those you see in most copy, because by using these methods, you will dig in deep to real-life experience — even though the information comes in through different "doorways" with each method. Take your time using these techniques before you start on the copy itself — doing so will pay off in multiples!

**3. They offer incontrovertible proof, in testimonials, facts, logic and description, to show they know what they're talking about and to prove**

## what they say is true.

Proof is very often the main difference between copy that sells like crazy and copy that sells little or nothing at all.

Testimonials from customers and also from experts are among the most convincing form of proof available. Unfortunately, testimonials are not usually structured correctly. Most testimonials you see are vague, weak and ineffective.

Here's a formula for a testimonial that is remarkably effective:

1. I had this problem.
2. I tried everything to fix the problem but it was hopeless!
3. Then, I discovered product X.
4. Wow! Problem solved and these are the (specific) results.

Here's an example of that kind of testimonial. It only implies points 1 and 2 above, but notice how powerful it is when you first read it:

*"David Garfinkel taught me more about writing copy that makes money than everyone else combined in my 10 years at agencies like J. Walter Thompson and BBDO. I was the lead strategist behind branding campaigns that led to over \$100 million in sales through traditional brand advertising. But no one I met at the agencies holds a candle to David when it comes to teaching how to write direct response copy that creates immediate sales."*

*Ben Mack*

*Author, "Think Two Products Ahead," Wiley, to be released February 2007*

Was this a solicited testimonial? Absolutely. After Ben said words like that spontaneously to me for the third time in conversation, I asked him if I could have them in writing, and he said yes. So that would make it a solicited testimonial, wouldn't it? :)

Other forms of proof that make your copy more believable (and more profitable) include:

- **Facts.** Answers to the simple who-what-why-when-where-how questions that journalists ask when they're writing an article. There's a reason reporters ask those questions — the answers to them add credibility to a story they're writing. The exact same thing happens when you use facts the same way in copy.
- **Logic.** People tend to believe things that "make sense." A surefire way of getting people to see how something makes sense is to make simple logical statements about

what you're promising in your copy. In fact, maybe the Federal Trade Commission should launch an ad campaign aimed at advertisers with the following tag line:  
**"Logic — the anti-hype."**

- **Description.** Remember in the last report, where I was talking about the sales letter for an ear infection cure that wasn't making any sales? I'm sure that the copywriter would have had a much better chance of making sales if he had taken the time to describe what ear infections were and why they occurred, in easy-to-understand specific detail. That would prove he really knows what he's talking about. Description is a wonderful form of proof.

#### **4. They make their copy interesting and easy to read. They format the copy so it's easy on the reader's eyes.**

Look at successful sales letters and you'll notice they have a number of things in common:

- The layout is not cluttered. It's clean and focused.
- Paragraphs are short -- usually four lines or less. Sentences are short. Words are short.
- The copy includes interesting facts and descriptions which prompt the reader to create mental images. It includes stories and generates emotions in the reader.
- It's conversational. Sometimes when you read it you forget you're reading "copy" - it seems like you're having a conversation with the person who wrote it.
- If you're in the target market, you could have sworn this copy was written just for you! (That's because it was.)

One of my favorite copywriters was Madison Avenue superstar David Ogilvy. I'll never forget this advice he once gave:

"You can't bore people into buying!"

#### **5. They offer a guarantee that makes it safe to buy.**

Beginning marketers consider guarantees controversial. They worry that they will be ripped off by unscrupulous customers who will want to take advantage of them.

There's no need to worry. I'm here to tell you that it's true — and, it's nothing to worry about.

See, a certain number of people will take advantage of your guarantee not for legitimate reasons, but because they are rip-off artists. That's the bad news.

But here's the good news: If you have a product that is a good value for the money you are charging, then the number of dishonest customers will be relatively small — about 5% to 10% of those who buy.

Why is that good news? Because a fair and clearly stated guarantee will increase your sales by two or three times.

Do the math. You'll see that you'll make a lot more money when you offer a guarantee that makes it safe to buy.

Coming in **Special Report 6**, tomorrow: The hidden truth revealed: where you must never look for copywriting knowledge... why learning to write copy that sells is more like learning to ride a bike than it what you would think of as “learning to write”... and, the four things you must look for before you choose any program of copywriting instruction.

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