

How you can write copy that gets results!

Year after year people make the same mistakes in direct response copy. You can avoid the most common and costly blunders by following these proven tips.

1 Write in direct response language. Use short paragraphs and short words. This ad has 68% short words — five letters or less. Strive for at least 65-75%. Never go under 50% unless you're writing to PhD's. Make your sentences and paragraphs flow like a breeze. Ignore good grammar when you have good reason. Keep the bucket brigade going: start paragraphs with *And, But, So you see, However...* Use the freshest concepts and the most colorful language you can without disturbing the flow. Use hot words: *free, new, emergency, now, secret, easy, introducing, save, guarantee, today...* And the hottest word of all: **YOU!** Use bullets a lot.

2 Write lots of headlines. Always think up from 10 to 100 headlines. Select 3 or 4, play with those for a while, and then boil them down to one. This produces better headlines and usually saves time.

3 Drop the warm-ups. You'll almost destroy your entire letter by starting off, "As a homeowner, you know how maintenance costs are climbing every day..."

4 STAND OUT. Separate yourself from the competition as clearly as you can. (Or make your fund appeal uniquely important and urgent.) Discover, isolate, and dramatize all the reasons for doing business with you instead of someone else. Build your entire mail package or ad around these reasons.

5 Sell benefits, not features. Readers don't buy products, they buy benefits and advantages. Talk about *buying points*. *Selling points* (product features) belong inside brochures, if anywhere. Be humble enough to realize that nobody would give 2 cents for any of your product *features*.

6 Learn to give. Most advertisers and charities think of direct response strictly as a device to get. Unfortunately, most readers also want only to get. So, to succeed, you must adopt a "give" orientation. Beyond what you offer in the product or service, you must learn to give them something immediately in your ad or letter: news, business tips, interesting stories, giveaway items, etc.

7 Use testimonials. They're proof that you're as good as you say you are, and that you'll do what you say you will. Like:

"... your letter pulled 354% better than any letter we've used before" David Harper, President. David Harper & Company.

It's called "credibility" and you can't do direct response without it!

8 Money-back guarantee. Whatever you're selling, make sure you offer a money-back guarantee. It's a critical factor in getting someone to send in their money to someone they don't know. Maybe even never hear of!

9 Credit cards, 800 numbers. Credit card purchases and 800 numbers can increase your response by as much as 30%.

10 Ask for action! It's amazing how often otherwise good copy never gets around to asking for anything. It's as simple as this — if you don't ask for action, you probably won't get any.

11 Budget your time. Devote about a third of your writing time to the lead elements: headline, sub-head, teaser, superscript, opening paragraph.

12 Keep current. Direct response is more scientific than institutional advertising. And like a fast-moving science, it has discoveries daily. To keep up with it all, you should read direct marketing publications. In your specialty, you also have must-read publications. If you don't have the time, see the next tip:

13 Use specialists. If you don't have experienced direct response people in-house, hire some or go outside. Do NOT go to a general advertising agency. The reason is, most agencies don't understand direct response. And when you need direct response, about all they can do for you is help you lose your shirt! Your best choice is and experienced direct response agency with a proven track record.

We Can Help You!

Brian Keith & Company is one of the most talented direct response agencies in the nation. We create results-getting packages and campaigns for a wide variety of clients throughout the United States — several of whom have had incredible growth since they came to us. We can do the same for YOU, too!

Test us! Let us create an ad or mail package to compete against your present piece on a split test. If you're thinking of a major campaign, you'll be doing yourself a favor by calling us today. Or as we say in the trade, DON'T DELAY! ACT NOW!!! Call for a free no-obligation critique based on today's top professional standards.

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