HOW TO WIN THE SALES COPY WRITING GAME

By Joe Robson

First of all you must know the Rules.

I can almost hear some of you thinking right now.....

Rules? What rules?

I'm a good letter writer aren't I? I compile an excellent report don't I? And I've always been known to have a good command of the English language haven't I? So to write good Web copy, or an eye-catching Advertisement, I just tell my readers how good my product is in a sound professional manner. Don't I?

NO!

I'm afraid that's one of the biggest misconceptions that prevails among Internet marketers. Because before you start writing those killer web pages and ezine ads it's essential to know how persuasive Sales Copy is structured.

First of all the golden rule of advertising is

----------- "THERE ARE NO GOLDEN RULES!"

Most successful advertising follows the same set of basic 'rules'. But we should really refer to them as guidelines. Because rules are meant to be broken. Otherwise we would have no room for innovation or creativity. But breaking the fundamental guidelines can be risky. And risk in advertising can bring great rewards - or expensive failure.

So until you have a lot of Copywriting experience behind you, stick to the tried and proven Copywriting basics and you won't go far wrong. And, to coin an over-used but appropriate phrase, why try to re-invent the wheel?

These principles have been used by successful advertisers since time immemorial. THEY WORK!. And who are we to argue?

----------THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF A SUCCESSFUL AD

Yes I know you think you've read it all before, but let's look at the essential elements of a successful sales message......

THE HEADLINE grabs the reader's attention.

THE SUBHEAD reinforces the main heading.

ILLUSTRATION or PHOTO emphasizes the headline benefit.

THE BODY COPY starts with a compelling paragraph that leads the reader in to the next section.

FURTHER PARAGRAPHS support and reinforce the benefits of the offer.

PENULTIMATE PARAGRAPH warns the reader of the consequences of missing out on the offer.

FINAL PARAGRAPH stimulates response. (Order now) PS gives a further reason to respond and reinforces the offer.

COMPANY LOGO (almost) ALWAYS goes at the end. Except web pages.

If you are writing a direct response sales letter, this structure should almost always be used, (along with the many other successful marketing ploys that are added to your sales package). Web pages require a slightly different technique, but the overall principle is still the same;

Grab Attention, Stimulate Interest, Build up Desire, Urge the reader into Action!

---------- "OH PLEASE NO - NOT AIDA AGAIN!

'Fraid so. But if it makes you feel any better I could re-phrase it. So how about...

Stop him in his tracks. Pin his ears back. Excite him to fever pitch. Tell him that because your offer is so fantastic only a fool would let such a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity pass him buy and he must order now or else he'll regret it for ever so he should grab his credit card now and enjoy the life-style of his dreams and be the envy of his friends forever!

It means the same but I think AIDA is easier to remember.

ATTENTION. INTEREST. DESIRE. ACTION. Keep these four 'triggers' in the forefront of your mind when writing your copy, and I promise you won't go far wrong.

---------- "WE ARE ALL SELLING SOMETHING"

I keep using the word SELL throughout these scribblings of mine. The object of all advertising is to SELL something. But not necessarily for cash gain.

If you have a 'Free Report' for download, you must SELL the idea that your information is credible and of use to the reader. When advertising in the press for charity workers you have to SELL the benefits of being a volunteer. And a brochure about the local library must SELL the reader the benefits of it's location, and how his or her life-style would be greatly improved etc.

---------- "FEATURES DON'T SELL"

Whatever you are selling, remember this extremely important point. Don't try to sell the features of your product or service. Sell the 'BENEFIT TO THE READER' of sending for your free information or whatever. Burn that into your brain because if you fail to sell the benefits, you sell nothing.

We just aren't even remotely interested in how technologically advanced your new software is. Or how fast it is. Or that it took 3 years to design and Bill Gates is shaking in his boots. These are FEATURES. And Features don't sell. Only BENEFITS achieve can that.

We are only turned on when you show us the benefits of how much time it will save us, and how much our friends will admire those fantastic Christmas cards we'll be designing in 10 seconds flat.

So show your reader BENEFITS, BENEFITS, and MORE BENEFITS!

That's the one Golden Rule you must NEVER break!