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A Magic Number for Writing Sales Letters

By Matthew Cobb

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by: **Matthew Cobb**

When I write sales letters for my clients, one rule I always start with is The Rule of 7.

I learned about The Rule of 7 from one of my good friends who once ran for political office. In his campaign, he made certain that his name appeared seven times in all of his radio spots.

Why? Because that's generally the number of times required before a name "magically" sticks in the mind of a prospect. The Rule of 7 is often used in radio and television advertising. But this isn't an isolated occurrence—the number seven seems to be a bit magical in other areas, like prospecting and linguistics.

Do you know the average number of times experts say you need to make contact with a prospect before they will be ready to commit?

Seven.

Can you guess how many times linguists say a person must use a word before it becomes a true part of their vocabulary?

That's right—seven.

This "magic" is the reason I try to repeat my client's product name or business name seven times in the sales letters I write for them.

The truth is, we're not really talking about magic, here. It's really about generating recognition for a name or a concept. It's about embedding something in a prospect's subconscious mind. It's about branding. I use The Rule of 7 to write sales letters, but the idea can be applied to other areas of marketing, too.

A Magic Number for Writing Sales Letters

Every person and every thing has an identity—and branding is about more than just a logo. A brand identity is about who you are, what you offer and the benefits of choosing you over the competition. The name you choose to operate under—whether your personal name, your business name, your product name, or your website address—is a link to all of that information. Repetition, which is what makes The Rule of 7 work, strengthens the recognition and recollection of your brand.

Now, all the "experts" may come back later and say that "seven" isn't the right number after all. It's nine. Or it's five. Or it's eight–point–three. But it doesn't really matter, does it? Seven works well as a general rule. (Besides, it is a lucky number.)

Of course, I know that fulfilling The Rule of 7 is no guarantee a prospect will accept an offer. But I know using the rule increases the chance that a prospect will see my name or the name of one of my websites and think, "Oh, yeah, I remember Seductive Sales Letters" or "I remember Matthew Cobb."

Recognition and recollection—that's what The Rule of 7 is all about.

One word of warning, though. Just because seven times is good doesn't mean that seventy times is even better. Repeating the same name over and over again can grow annoying and cause prospects to quit reading. And then, you may not even be able to fulfill The Rule of 1.

Matthew Cobb is an independent copywriter/consultant who operates Seductive Sales Letters. Visit and sign up for the official monthly publication, The Seductive Sales Letter Clinic.

SALES LETTERS FOR SUCCESS

By Meredith Pond

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Sales letters are one of the most popular forms of advertising today, and have been for some time. The reason for this is simple: they work. However, with no pure form and no specific requirements for format, length, etc., writing a truly effective sales letter can be a daunting task for even the most seasoned marketing professional.

To come up with a sales letter that sizzles without turning your prospects off, there are a few general rules you'd be wise to follow.

First, let's talk about length. In my line of work, I see a lot

of sales letters. Most of these are one to three pages long, which is generally appropriate for a sales letter. Just the other day, however, I got a call from a man who wanted to know how much I would charge him to edit his sales letter, complaining that he just wasn't getting the results he wanted. When I asked him how long the letter was, he replied, "it's about twelve pages." Twelve pages!! Would you want to be pitched to for twelve whole pages? Yuck!

When you sit down to write your sales letter, ask yourself how much patience you have when reading something of this nature. Would you get bored, even angry, if someone expected you to keep reading their sales letter for five pages? Three pages? When writing your letter, be mindful of your target audience and their schedules. If your prospects are unlikely to have more than five or ten minutes to devote to your sales pitch, try stick to one page.

Now let's talk hype. Most of the sales letters I've come across are full of hype, because that's what the customer wants. Hype can be effective or ineffective, depending on your business and the kind of people you're trying to sell to. If you're selling an MLM business opportunity, hype can work well. On the other hand, if your intended audience consists of savvy, experienced business people, you'll probably do better with a brief introduction followed by an explanation of what your product or service can do for their business.

In either case, be careful about using too much bold type or

screaming your message at customers. Putting important points in bold type or caps can be an effective marketing tool, but only when used in moderation. Exclamation points can also be helpful, but use them sparingly. When reading back through your letter, pay attention to the tone. If you feel you're being yelled at, tone it down a bit.

A well-written, well-targeted sales letter can do wonders for sagging sales. For tips on writing effective sales letters, see <http://www.drnunley.com/copywriting.htm>.

Meredith Pond is editor and manager of DrNunley's <http://CheapWriting.com>. See her low-cost writing and editingservices for students and business people, including a web siterewriting package. Reach Meredith at meredith@drnunley.com or 801-328-9006.

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