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Attention Deficit Sales Letter Disorder

By Ray L. Edwards

For any marketer, attention is a precious commodity. With consumers bombarded with thousands of advertising messages each day the question of how to make your message stand out of the crowd becomes even more critical.

Any successful sales letter must accomplish two things:

1. It must sell the prospect on reading the sales message all the way through
2. It must lead the prospect to the most desired action, whether it's to make a purchase or subscribe to your newsletter.

If the copywriter fails at Step 1, then Step 2 becomes an impossibility. In other words, it's unfeasible to make a sale if the sales message is not read. Many copywriters overlook Step 1 and therefore even though they have a great offer and close, the message is not "attractive" to read. The bottom line is that the sales letter suffers from Attention Deficit Sales Letter Disorder - ADSLD!

Direct marketers know that half the battle is won if they can just get their letters opened. Much thought and testing go into determining the size, design, color, message and layout of the mailing envelope. These marketers know that if that envelop is not opened, then the letter is not read and the sale is not made. Simple.

For the online marketer, there are no envelopes to be opened even though some webmasters create a Flash introductory page that can act like an envelope. When a prospect comes to a website the message is there to be read. But how can this prospect be enticed into reading the sales letter all the way through?

Here are a number of ways that I remedy ADSLD for my copywriting clients:

1. Several tests have shown that a RED headline gets attention over any other font color choice. Red is often associated with danger but it also says, "This is important, read me!"

2. Remove anything from the page that doesn't support the sales message or distracts from the sales message. This includes most animated graphics and bright colors for the page background that competes with the foreground text. Nothing beats just plain black font against a white background. If you can keep the number of colors used to three or less, this will also help readability.

3. Keep the text table width under 700 px. If the text is set too wide then it becomes tedious to read from one line to the next because too much head and eye movement is involved.

4. The headline must engage the reader to read the rest of the message immediately. Headlines that work best are those that promise a BIG benefit for READING the letter, induce some curiosity and written in large bold type. It should also have some `newsy' element to it as well.

5. The format and layout of the sales letter should be inviting to read. 12 pt. Arial font works well

online, paragraphs kept under five lines and appropriate highlighting, bolding and subheads all make the letter appear easy to read.

6. The lead in, or the hook for the sales letter must arrest the attention of the reader and seduce them into wanting to read the entire letter. This can be best done by making a bold promise for reading the letter itself. Great hooks include stories, factual statements of a surprising kind and a strong testimonial from a user of the product. Whatever method is used the lead in has to break into the conversation that is already taking place in the readers head. Using popular news items you know that will be familiar to your target audience is another effective strategy.

7. There should be prompts all along the letter that encourages the reader to keep reading. This could be as simple as writing: "Keep reading ..." One of the best strategies is to begin a thought process and break it with another subject and return to complete the thought later. This can be done simply by writing, for example, "I'll tell you how I lost 38 lbs in just 3 weeks, but before I do so let me tell you ... [other parenthetical idea or story goes here]" You've planted an initial idea that requires resolution and the reader must continue reading to gain it.

8. Be UNIQUE. If all of the sales letters in your industry looks and reads the same then why should a prospect read yours? You should try to go for a unique look and feel for your website. This may mean using a mascot, a humorous twist in your message or what can be more unique than your picture or story? The fact is that you want to stand out from the crowd and don't be afraid to push the envelope sometimes. One of the cardinal sins of copywriting is to be boring.

9. Focus your message on the reader not on your company or product. This is a major downfall of big corporation who think that everyone should just know how great their companies are. But your prospect is basically motivated by selfish desires. The questions you must be answering all through the sales letter is "What's in it for your reader?"

Often there is a debate about just how long a sales letter should be. Keep in mind that any person will read a 1,000 page book if it's all about them. About your company? ... that's another story altogether.

With thousands of marketers coming online you'll need to fight more and more for the ATTENTION of your prospects. I've been able to use these same tips I'm sharing with you to win attention and increased profits for my copywriting clients. You can do the same for your marketing message as well.

Ray L. Edwards is a master copywriter, published author and Internet Marketing Consultant. His copywriting clients have claimed up to 1,600% increase in their conversion rates just from using his services. He is an expert in writing sales copy for the web. He has studied extensively the relationship between website structure and design as a factor in internet sales success. You may get more tips at:

<http://www.webcopy-writing.com>

How ADD Affects Families

By Sarah K. Jenkins

Typically, there is a lot of blame and frustration associated with Attention Deficit Disorder. Depending on how long the problem has gone before being diagnosed, there may be serious mental and emotional scars as family members and the child dealt with issues associated with ADD. This disorder is not only difficult for parents, but also the child with ADD and other siblings in the family.

The obvious victim of ADD is the child it affects. Being accustomed to negativity, these children usually suffer from very low self-esteem. Although they want to behave well, they have impulsive actions that typically result in constant punishment. Parents and teachers of an ADD child often are not aware or do not accept that the child suffers from a disorder and they are not always acting on a conscience level. The child, after being reprimanded and not being able to control their actions, is left feeling as though they will never be adequate or meet everyone else's expectations.

The parents of an ADD child suffer from incredible frustration and doubt of their parenting skills. Often ridiculed by teachers, family members, and other acquaintances, they are often viewed as being the cause of their child's behavior, as though lack of discipline is the root cause of their child's actions. Attention Deficit Disorder sometimes places a strain on the parents' marital relationship as well, as parents blame each other for being overly lenient or harsh in their rearing habits. This can lead to many arguments and disagreements that prove to be difficult on spouses.

An often forgotten casualty of Attention Deficit Disorder is the siblings of a child with ADD. Often not apparent, siblings in this situation often experience similar frustration and anxiety as the parents and child with ADD. Jealousy sometimes plays a factor in their feelings as their sibling requires so much more attention, even if it is negative in nature. Also, these children often get the brunt of their sibling's impulsive actions, including aggressive behavior typical of ADD. These children may also find themselves being categorized in school and other social environments because of their sibling's behavior, which can also have a negative connotation.

In addition to immediate family, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins may also be affected when a child has ADD. Depending on the closeness of the family, behavior outbursts and discipline issues may be a factor dealt with on various levels. In extreme cases, ADD may actually cause some familial

relationships to be severed.

Sarah is an acclaimed writer on medical matters, and has written extensively on the subjects of Attention Deficit Disorder, Bird Flu and Cohn's Disease. For more of her articles, go to

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