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COMMUNICATION 101

By Dennis Mahagin

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There's no question about it: E Mail has arrived. According to a research group studying technology trends, by the year 2005, one third of all electronic billing will be carried out via e mail routes; and devices like the "Blackberry" (a palm-sized, mobile wireless device designed exclusively for sending and retrieving e mail) will no doubt inevitably be scaled down to micro-size and incorporated into household appliances and/or items of clothing-- so that sometime in the not-distant future you will be checking your Inbox from under a band-aid-sized fanny pack velcro snap, shoe sole, or the brim of your favorite baseball cap. There are even companies who will now pay you \$\$ to read, and send, E Mails!

<http://www.zwallet.com/index.html?user=artfor>

The E Mail now stands poised to replace the "cold call" as one of the most widely applicable and effective business tools of the 21st century. Herein lies the caveat:

Technology such as this forces upon us a new communication style, summed up below for the purpose of keeping your vital business e mail communications from being mouse-pulled to the nearest Trash icon by a deluged and easily-distracted reader. Think of the acronym, T.I.T.E.-- for tight writing-- to burn these basic principles into your brainpan database.

Some Ballpark rules to ponder:

GET PERSONAL -- Engage back-up e mail accounts for sent-and-received messages of the FFA (Free For All) Links and Autoresponder variety, freeing up your main mailbox for "quality time" correspondence, wherein you'll generate the bulk of your bona fide, "personal" contacts, two or three of which will be worth way more, over the long haul, than a hundred anonymous, automated

hits that are divorced from your direct influence and mean very little outside a multi-level-marketing (MLM) context, which of course has its place but is handled by robots and, by default ! , is outside the scope of this discussion. Which leads us right into:

BAD FORM — If your message, sent by human – to human, reeks even remotely of a form letter, odds are it will be discarded, half-read or ignored completely, unless you're giving away autographed copies of Elvis Presley's last prescription refill !

Use templates and macros to ease the process of multiple mailings, but try as best you can to "personalize" each message, (especially as concerns the Title and Body of the e mail) and those few minutes of extra work will pay off huge

dividends. Nothing turns a reader off more than the stale tone and "voicemail-menu-cold" qualities of a form letter.

USE WHITE SPACE — Break up your message with liberal usage of the spacebar, both horizontally and vertically, i.e.— between sentences like this; and between paragraphs

like this. It's just easier on overworked eyes period . Now for the main course of study :

1. [T] Title:

An often-underestimated but crucial part of your message. It must have a hook that makes the reader curious enough to double-click on it.

Virus – mongers have been intimately aware of, and adept at this technique for years. Nothing gets read until it's opened. If someone referred you to the person receiving your e mail, include that name as "mutual friend" in the title bar.

If there is a benefit to be conveyed by your message, try to sum it up in a title that grabs the reader's interest immediately.

By way of example— 1) Bad Title: "Hello Potential Customer John X !";
2) Good Title: "Website Traffic Booster Recommended by Mutual Friend Joe Y !"

2. [I] Introduction

In a paragraph consisting of no more than 3 sentences, start your message by clearly and succinctly telling your reader who you are , and why you're writing. If you must "toot your own horn" here, do it very lightly. There is plenty of time later (in future communications) for the reader to find out all about your background, qualifications, and inherently fine personal traits!

Right off the bat, like a major league relief pitcher "setting the plate" for his best pitch, in the intro you are quickly working the reader into a malleable state of mind to receive the next step, wherein you:

3. [T] Tell the Tale

To the extent that, in steps 1 and 2, you've made a promise to deliver a pitch, or set up a scenario of sorts, here is the litmus test for how well you deliver on that promise. Say what you need to say in strong, specific terms, and be as brief as possible without damaging the thrust of your intent. Create a sense of urgency by conveying an easily-understood benefit to the reader, and follow up with reasons why you are the person best suited, in the here and now, to bestow such a benefit upon the reader. Have you ever heard someone tell a joke really well? The trick is in getting quickly and smoothly to the punchline, then delivering it with an even tone and straight face, right before:

4. [E] Ending

Believe it or not, this is where most "communicators" get hung up. You can nail the first three steps like a seasoned pro, but not capping off your e – message in a timely fashion can be a surefire way to see it "fragged."

The reader must be left with a taste of curiosity lingering on the roof of his or her mouth, that can only be quenched by— you guessed it!— responding to your message. No matter how eloquent you may indeed be, the old adage "less is more" could not be more appropos than at this juncture. If you cannot "tell the tale" in 75 words (100 max.) delete the copy and start again.

You will be rewarded with a swelling address book, successful link exchanges by the score, and a rare skill indispensable for navigating the rough cyber-seas of communication— tight writing.

Dennis Mahagin promotes and develops content for websites, writes articles, fiction and poetry for publication on the Web, and puts together grant applications in his spare time.
<http://www.artforstudios.com/>

Money Savvy 101

By News Canada

(NC)—Life is full of transitions, from high school to university, from first job to the next. Each of these changes brings with it a financial 'first': How much will it cost to go to college or university? What are

my rights when I lease an apartment? Can I afford a car? Do I need insurance? What kind of financial services should I have? Where should I invest my money?

Until now it has not been easy to get objective answers to all of these questions in one place. Now you can visit Consumer Connection's Web site at <http://consumer.ic.gc.ca> that has been created by Industry Canada's Office of Consumer Affairs. It has been creatively produced to give Canadian consumers great information without sacrificing a fun and interactive setting.

Money Savvy 101 is a product that provides answers to all your personal finance questions. The answers are simple and straightforward, containing in-depth information, entertaining animation and links to other great Web sites. Money Savvy 101 allows consumers to see how much things actually cost, how to deal with landlords that are giving you a hard time, and all other types of questions or situations.

Consumer Connection (

) is an award-winning Web site. It provides rapid

access to consumer information, powerful tools to cut research time, and many useful links to consumer and other organizations. Canadians can access Consumer Connection from home, the public library, community access points or from Government of Canada, provincial and territorial service outlets. For a variety of information on everything from bank fees, to privacy rights, to the latest scams or frauds, this is the place to go.

provides a wide selection of current, ready-to-use copyright free news stories and ideas

for Television, Print, Radio, and the Web.

is a niche service in public relations, offering access to print, radio, television, and now

the Internet media, with ready-to-use, editorial "fill" items. Monitoring and analysis are two more of our primary services. The service supplies access to the national media for marketers in the private, the public, and the not-for-profit sectors. Your corporate and product news, consumer tips and information are packaged in a variety of ready-to-use formats and are made available to every Canadian media organization including weekly and daily newspapers, cable and commercial television stations, radio stations, as well as the Web sites Canadians visit most often. Visit

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Money Savvy 101

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