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Copywriting Successes and Failures: A Comparison Of the Good and Bad

By Karon Thackston

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It's about 7:00am and time to start my day. While my exact routine varies, one of the first things I always do is check email. As the flood rolls in, I have my finger poised on the delete button... aimed and ready to fire. But then something catches my eye.

On this morning, I decided to take a closer look at one email in particular. That led me to also lend a critical eye to some other ads as well. So below, I'll give you my evaluation of a few of the many email ads I've received... which ones got my attention, which ones I just rolled my eyes at... and why.

Attention Getter

Here's one that is well targeted, indeed! The headline read: "Inquiry About Becoming An Affiliate." That got my attention because my copywriting course does have an affiliate program. I'm always interested in adding new affiliates to the group. So I read on.

Part of the message is below:

Good morning. I would like to inquire about possibly working with you and your company on an affiliate basis.

My company maintains a fresh, 100%, opt-in email database exceeding 15,000,000 qualified consumers. These consumers have specifically requested to receive purchase information regarding your product(s) or service(s).

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If you're interested, I would be glad to speak with you about a cost-per-action (CPA) email campaign that WILL make additional sales and generate alternative revenue.

While the generic line about my product(s) or service(s) let me know immediately that this was a "canned" ad, it still gave me something to think about. Did I respond? Yes! Why? If I could get the copywriting course in front of over 15,000,000, and pay the same affiliate commission I was paying anyway, what would I have to lose?

Rolling My Eyes

However, among the pile of emails were some real duds. I must get 10 of these ridiculous emails a week. You've no doubt seen them, too. They say something like "I joined this program a few months ago and promptly forgot about it." Oh please!

Why did I roll my eyes at this one? While it started off good, it wasn't punchy enough to get me to respond right away. That's no major crime. It often takes repeated exposure of the same message to get a good response. But... when you get the exact same message from several different people 3 or 4 times a day - you find out quickly that this is an overused ad, not a personal recommendation.

Then there are the ads that are just extremely targeted . A few headline examples are:

Karon, FREE 30-Day Sample of HGH - One problem with this is that I don't need Human Growth Hormone. The other problem is that clicking the email launches one of those automatic scripts that take you directly to the site. Something I personally can't stand! I also get at least 3 of these annoying things a day. With me, chances are that if the ad pops up a screen when I click it, I delete the thing before the screen even finishing loading.

Health Discovery! No Diet! No Exercise! - All the exclamation points immediately let me know that this is a hard sell scam. Not to mention, I have trouble keeping weight ON... not off. This one was deleted without reading any further due to simple irrelevance.

Approved and Ready! - The copy of this ad simply stated: "Your home refinance loan is approved! To get your approved amount, go here." Hmmm... if memory serves me correctly, I never applied for a home loan. Click!

As you can see, all of my first impressions were based on the subject line. Other factors in the ad copy contributed to my final decision about whether to look into the offer. The subject line, however, was the single playing card as to whether I would read ANY of the copy.

Final notes: put the majority of your time into developing your subject line. Then test, test, test to get the best results. Also, make very, VERY sure your mailing list is targeted. With all the options today for segmenting lists, you have the luxury to email your ads to a group much more specific than "women over 30." The more targeted you can get, the better your response will be.

Which words make *your* customers buy? Let Karon show you. Boost your profits by learning to write strategically created copy that hits a nerve and makes the sale. Boost your search engine rankings, too! 3 FREE bonuses with your purchase. Learn more now at <http://www.copywritingcourse.com>

Karon is Owner and President of KT & Associates who offers targeted copywriting, copy editing & ezine article services. Receive her FREE ebook, Marketing Made Easy and subscribe to her ezine "Business Essentials" at when you visit her site at <http://www.ktamarketing.com>.

Learn How to Fail

By Jude Wright

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II bet you've heard the phrase, "Failure is not an option."
But, let's think about it.

What would happen if no one ever failed – at anything? How would you learn? Learning from past failures, and successes, shows us how we can do it better next time. Without mistakes, we would never appreciate our accomplishments.

There is a lesson to be learned from each mistake. Take that mistake and make it your challenge. Break it into pieces. What was the turning point to change it from success into failure?

Take the first step and analyze it. Did it work like you wanted? Good. Go to the next step. Keep going.

At each step, decide how you can improve the process, wording, product – whatever the problem is. Then, try again.

Even the Wright brothers' first flight failed, but they tried again. What if THEY had given up?

Persevere. Your challenges will lead the way to your successes.

In the middle of difficulty lies Opportunity.
Albert Einstein

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Each major success is made up of a series of smaller successes – and of many failures – yours or someone else's. Learn from the mistake. Make it your goal to find out WHY.

One reason for failure is setting goals that are difficult, even impossible, to achieve. Many baby steps add up to a whole success. Success is accomplished by setting one small, achievable, goal at a time.

We are our own worst critic. When we fail, we make it a reflection of our "self." It seems we usually identify our "self" with our mistakes instead of our achievements. That is one mistake you do NOT want to make. Your mistake is not YOU.

Don't overlook your successes. You need them to look back on when those nasty surprises pop up. Remember them when you think you're a failure.

So, in 2004, don't say, "Failure is not an option." Instead, say, "I can change it to a success by _____ (insert your own solution)!"

Jude Wright is a newly retired Internet Junkie. She has five websites of her own and designs sites for others. She caters to the Internet "Newbie." Visit her three main sites at: <http://aboutaffiliates.com>; <http://i-marketingorganizer.com>; <http://nutritious-cooking.com>.



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