

Exclamation Points Are Your Enemy !!!!

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Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
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By Tim Gross

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Dear Online Marketer: Do your ads look like this?:

- ** Best Home Business In The Universe!!!!!!
- ** Earn \$20,000 Your First Week!!!!!!!!!!
- ** YOU WON'T BELIEVE THIS ! ! ! !
- ** INCREDIBLE ! ! ! !
- ** FANTASTIC PAYOUT ! ! ! ! ! ! !

If the sentences above resemble the ad copy you're using online, I can tell you why the money's not rolling in: You're killing your credibility, which kills your sales. The exclamation point is the most over-used and abused character on the keypad these days, and the "quotation" key is getting mighty jealous. (I'll explain what that means in a minute.)

Much in the same ways that insecure kids become bullies in the schoolyard to compensate for their weaknesses, unsure online marketers are littering their sales pitches with enough exclamation points to declare the internet a disaster area.

Tell-Tale Sign

If you feel your sales pitch needs a few dozen exclamation points to raise the enthusiasm level, it's a sure sign that your ad copy is weak and needs improving. Stating the benefits of your product with quiet self-assurance and backing it up with concrete facts, enthusiastic comments, and real testimonials will beat exclamation points any day of the week. (Testimonials don't get used nearly enough online – that's what I meant about the 'quotation' key being

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jealous.)

Which of the following is more convincing to you?

1) Earn \$100,000 a year or more with this exciting product!!!!

2) Our top rep earned \$127,432 last year, and many others earned between \$41,489 and \$105,995. This proven product almost sells itself, and with our ongoing one-on-one help, you can do the same. Remember: We'll be by your side every step of the way.

(Did you choose #2? So does everyone else.)

1) Our MLM is incredible!!!!!! Your downline does all the work!!!!!! Most generous payout in the industry!!!! There's nothing else like this!!!!!! Sign up now!!!!!!

2) If you're wary of MLM programs or have had bad luck with them in the past, I understand your skepticism. MLM has gotten a bad rap from some fly-by-night companies selling shady products. Let me assure you that our program is completely different from anything you've seen before. With our top-quality product, experienced leadership, and generous pay structure, we are positioned for success – especially for those who get in on the ground floor. Sign up right now and get all the facts immediately. If you're not convinced it's everything I've said it is and more, your membership fee will be cheerfully refunded.

(Deal with known concerns – It makes your offer more believable.)

As you can see from the above examples, here's the bad news: Writing without exclamation points requires more ad copy. (I call that bad news because for the person trying to write the ad, it seems like more "work".) In fact, when I re-work an ad that is riddled with !!!!'s, sometimes the ad winds up being 3 times longer than before.

THE GOOD NEWS

The good news is that longer ad copy is necessary to make the point and to make the sale, and it maximizes your chances of success.

If you're still not convinced: Have you ever noticed that on your favorite television sitcoms you never notice the laugh-track? ...That's because you're laughing at the same time. On really BAD sitcoms, the laugh-track can drive you crazy with its inane guffawing after every line. That's because the lines aren't funny, so the canned laughs feel forced

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and remind you how bad the show really is.

The same goes with exclamation points. When they naturally follow an unusual or strong statement, you don't even notice them. But when they follow sentences that just aren't convincing or exciting, they seem forced and actually DRAW ATTENTION to the fact that the ad doesn't seem genuine or effective.

The internet community is an intelligent, educated bunch. They're more likely to read U.S. Weekly than The National Enquirer. They won't be sold by empty hype and incomplete explanations. In addition, a good percentage of them have been taken advantage of through the internet before. They're wary – and for good reason. Using too many exclamation points is the sign of an amateur, and people want to deal with professionals.

So go forward, be fruitful, and un–multiply.

(Your exclamation points, that is!)

In PR, You Must Choose Your 'Enemy' Wisely

By Rusty Cawley

In PR, You Must Choose Your 'Enemy' Wisely by Rusty Cawley

When the great Carthaginian general Hannibal was just a boy, his father forced him to declare his undying hatred for Rome. After his father's death, Hannibal used that rage to propel him in a lifelong battle with the emerging Roman Empire.

Hannibal crossed the Alps with his army and its elephants. He defeated the Romans in battle after battle. Unfortunately for Carthage, Hannibal was wonderful at winning battles, but incompetent at winning wars.

After Hannibal's death, Rome took its wrath upon Carthage. The Romans destroyed the city, sold the inhabitants into slavery and sowed the land with salt so that no city could ever rise on that spot again.

The story of Hannibal points out two truths about developing a singular identity. First, it helps to choose a well–known enemy. Two thousand years after his death, Hannibal still ranks with Alexander, Caesar and Napoleon as one of the most famous generals of all time. (Just as Hannibal had Rome as his enemy, Alexander had Persia, Caesar had Pompey and Napoleon had Wellington.)

Second, it is important to choose the right enemy. By choosing Rome, Hannibal selected an enemy he

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could not defeat, an enemy he was forced to fight on its home turf, and an enemy that was so ruthless that it wiped Carthage from the earth.

So what is the right enemy?

To begin, it's important to realize there are two kinds of useful enemies.

The first is competition.

If you are anything less than the No.1 brand in your category, then your competitive enemy is whoever is on top. For Pepsi, the enemy is Coke. For Oracle, the enemy is Microsoft. For Reebok, the enemy is Nike.

If you are clearly the No. 1 brand, then your enemy is the No. 2 brand. You can't declare war on everyone. You must define your enemy to get any use out of your enemy.

Always try to define the battle as No. 1 versus No. 2., and forget everyone else.

The second kind of useful enemy is a public problem. This type of enemy gives you the opportunity to define your identity by seizing an issue.

Declare war on illiteracy, or on disease, or on famine. Take on any significant public problem that appeals to you.

But make sure of three things:

1. Your company has a logical, apparent connection to the cause. Exxon Mobil is contributing funds to help save endangered tigers. This is logical, given the long history of Exxon's mascot, the Exxon tiger. Yes, it's tenuous. But it's logical, and that's what counts.

2. Your company has the resources to make a significant impact on the problem. Don't take on hunger in Africa if you lack the time, money and resources to actually help alleviate hunger in Africa. You want a cause that is large enough to register with the public, but one that isn't so large that it straps your company or makes it look foolish.

3. Your company can remain committed to the cause for the long haul. How long? For all practical purposes, forever. The last thing you want is to become known as the company that used to do that very important thing that really helped the community, but quit.

Now you may ask why it's so important to have an enemy. Because we are defined by our rivals.

In the world of boxing, Joe Frazier was defined by his rivalry with Muhammad Ali. Among airlines, Pan Am was defined by its battle with TWA. Among department stores, Macy's was defined by its war with Gimbel's.

David was defined by Goliath.

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Churchill was defined by Hitler.

The Hatfields were defined by the McCoys.

If you want to create a singular identity, you must contrast your position with a rival. You need an enemy.

Don't wait for an enemy to appear through happenstance. Find the right enemy and declare war now.

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