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How To Write Sales-Making Headlines and Text

By J. R. Beach

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How long does it take to make a first impression? On the fast-paced internet you're likely to get less than 15 seconds. That's all they'll spend on your opening page unless you grab visitors with something that interests them.

And if you've spent effort and dollars to attract visitors, you don't want to lose them in the time it takes to back out of the driveway. After all, if you've got something to sell, you're not looking for "hits", you're looking for sales. The only item someone will buy in fifteen seconds is a face-value ticket to the Super Bowl.

With the advent of simpler, fast-loading sites with fewer graphics, headlines and text may be the most important tools you have during those 15 seconds.

Headlines

The objective of a headline is to interest the visitor in reading the text. Plain and simple. Without a well-written headline, visitors will never go far enough to investigate the details of what you've got to offer. You don't sell with a headline. That's the job of your text. All you want to do is get the reader to desire more information.

How To Write Sales—Making Headlines and Text

—Choose the right words

First, certain subjects create more interest than others. Among the most effective are money, wealth, love, health and safety. Practice writing three or four headlines using those subjects.

There are also words that seem to attract greater interest than others. Here are some of those words: Learn, discover, easy, new, proven, save, you, now and free

Now re-write your headlines incorporating those words.

And, of course, many effective headlines start with "How to..." or "How you can..."

—Use a question

Many times a question works well because it involves the reader. Ever heard this one? "Where Do You Want To Go Today?" Sure you have.

Here are some other ways to incorporate a question into your headline:

"Have You Ever...?"

"Do You Want To..."

"Do You Think You Can..."

"How Do You..."

—Experiment with your headlines

Chances are, you're not going to hit the best possible headline on your first try. And nobody can tell you in advance what will work for your product or service. Don't be afraid to experiment early on, trying to gauge response to each headline.

—Put a tracking system in place

Make sure you have a system in place to track which headlines are generating response and which aren't. An easy way is to make multiple, identical pages on your site. Each page should contain a hit counter. Then assign each headline you use to a particular page. The highest number of responses wins. Headline one might be www.yourdomainname.com/product/hd1.html and the second headline aims visitors to www.yourdomainname.com/product/hd2.html.

Writing Effective Website Text

Now that you've perfected your headline, you should tailor your text to involve the visitor in your site, describe what your product or service will do for them and lead them toward a sale. Here are some DOs and DON'Ts:

—Highlight Benefits

People don't respond to features, they respond to benefits (what the product or service will DO for them or how it will make them FEEL). Therefore, turning the product's features into benefits is critical. For example, people aren't interested in a six-cylinder, turbo-charged 280-horsepower engine. That's a car's feature. They are, however,

interested in driving a car with quick acceleration to merge swiftly into highway traffic, pass slow-moving trucks on two-lane roads, etc. Those are the benefits of the engine. So stress benefits. Here's an easy way to do that:

W T M T Y I

A technique I've used for years to help turn features into benefits, WTMTYI is an abbreviation for "what that means to you is...". For every feature your product has, think "what that means to you is..." and complete the sentence. You'll have a benefit. "This quality vehicle has a turbo-charged six that generates 280 horsepower (and what that means to you is) You'll have plenty of power to maneuver in traffic and enough acceleration to feel comfortable motoring onto the expressway, and that's important, don't you think?"

—Quality over quantity

It's not how much you say, it is how well you say it. Less is better. After you first write your text, go back and make it tighter. Then do it again. The rationale for doing this is two-fold: reading a computer screen is harder than reading from paper and, with one hand on the mouse, your visitor is prone to use it as soon as he or she feels the least bit bored.

How To Write Sales—Making Headlines and Text

--Appeal to emotion rather than logic

Most purchases are made on an emotional level. Remember, people buy what they WANT, not what they NEED. They buy because of how the product or service will make them FEEL. That's emotion, not logic. Your text, then, should make them want the product, not insist that they need it. We need food, water, clothing and shelter. Everything else is a want.

--Don't use hype

If they're smart enough to navigate the web, assume they're smart enough to see through hype (and they've likely seen enough of it). If your product or service is worthy, it doesn't need hype. Besides, to make repeat or referral sales, you want to deliver more than you've promised. You can't do that if you've promised the world.

--Avoid incorporating incomprehensible vernacular to persuade your constituents to purchase
(Don't use big words to sell)

Don't reach for the Thesaurus in an attempt to impress your visitor. Text should be easy to read. It should flow. Don't use a large word when a smaller one will do. Please, whatever you do, never write like a lawyer or the guys who write user's manuals.

--Use proper grammar

Few things will hurt your credibility as will grammar and punctuation mistakes. You've been to pages containing misuse of the language. What was your impression? Not professional, perhaps? No, you don't have to be an English professor. Here's what you can do:

- Use a spell check program. Let it do the work for you.
- Have a friend proof-read your site. Have several friends proof-read it. If you don't have any qualified friends, pay a professional to help you (that's the cost of having no literate friends).
- When in doubt, simplify.

There are numerous sources of additional help on website selling. One of the top sources is <http://www.sitesell.com/> operated by Ken Evoy, M.D.

Mr. Beach is a veteran marketer and webmaster of award–winning BUSINESS–OPP.COM. The site focuses on identifying guaranteed business opportunities and offers a unique three–step money–making process. Plus free reports, promotional resources, a free e–zine subscription and free DSL Internet access are available at <http://www.business–opp.com>

Create your headline to DRAW the OPTIMUM results.

By Chuck Crawley

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We all know that your ad headline's main purpose is to
GET ATTENTION.

The question then is WHY?

Why are you trying to get my attention?

Is it because you want me to buy something from you or
you just want to get my email address, telephone number
or address for further followup?

You should know the answer to these questions BEFORE you
write your headlines. The ANSWER can help determine the
response that you get.

Don't you want to get the OPTIMUM results from your
headlines?

Optimum– the best or most favorable condition
for obtaining a given result.

Structure your headline to get the most favorable result.

Here are a few examples of how you can create your headlines
to target two given results (Sales and Sales Leads).

Targeted Sales Headlines

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"Has YOUR computer FAILED you lately?"

"Are YOU still drinking polluted Water?"

These headlines will *DRAW* highly targeted responses for
computers and Water purification products.

Leads Generation Headlines

=====
"Free Gift worth \$50, get yours today!"

"Free E-book, Learn how YOU can create wealth NOW!"

These headlines are great lead generators.

Knowing WHY you want to get my attention before you write your headlines can help you get what you WANT from the ads that you WRITE.



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