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**How to Get Your Message Across**

**By Jennifer Stewart**

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It sounds easy, doesn't it? Just send out a few sales letters, mention what you're selling and why people should buy it and that's about all there is to it.

Well, yes ... and no.

Sadly, the Internet has seen an increase in the number (and intensity) of hype-mail. You know the sort of thing: "Secrets Revealed – Earn \$10,000 a Week, Starting Now!!!"

Such over-the-top methods may have worked for a short time, but people have developed a healthy cynicism about these "offers" and now any business that sends out letters with unrealistic promises is going to lose credibility fast.

So, how do you get your message across to your potential customers and maintain your credibility?

There are five key points to remember when preparing your sales material – all equally important:

**People Like Dealing with Other People**

In the early days of the Internet, all small businesses were enthralled by the notion that they could portray themselves as huge enterprises. So you'd find sites that never used a singular personal pronoun, ever. It was always, "contact us"... "send us your suggestions" ... "our staff are waiting to ..." and so on. I know, because I did just this when I started my own site. Like so many others, I felt customers would

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only want to deal with a Big Operation.

But, people like doing business with other people, not with huge conglomerates. We're a gregarious lot, we humans, we enjoy the company of our fellows, so make it clear in your message that you are a real person. Don't be embarrassed to admit that you're the sole operator, in fact, this is a very positive benefit for many customers because it ensures that they'll receive personal attention.

### People Are Busy

Despite all we were promised back in the 70s and 80s,

technological advances have not led to increased leisure time, but just the opposite. Studies have shown that the majority of people are working longer hours now than they were two or three decades ago.

This means that time is precious, so don't waffle. Get straight to the point in your message. Tell your prospects in the first sentence what it is you're offering and why it will benefit them.

### People Like Directions

This is directly related to the previous point – people don't have time to play guessing games with you. Tell them, exactly, what you'd like them to do and they're much more likely to do it. Don't leave them looking for a missing page which explains the reason for the message, state it up front. Don't make them search for phone or fax numbers to call, list them clearly. Don't make it necessary to type in an e-mail address or URL, put in a hyperlink if you're sending out e-mail messages.

### People Like the Simple Approach

Again, this is directly related to the scarcity of spare time in our modern lives. It's quicker to read a series of short sentences which are arranged in short paragraphs than it is to wade through long, complex sentences and slabs of unrelieved paragraphs.

Incorporate one (count it ...1...) idea in each paragraph.

Use plenty of action words, forget the adverbs and the adjectives, they're just there for decoration. It's the nouns and verbs that get your message across.

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So don't wax lyrical about, "...the smooth, flowing lines of the new Whizzo cleaner that make it glide like silk across your floors ..." Just tell us that, "Whizzo cleaners get the job done fast."

### People Appreciate Professionalism

These people are your potential customers, the people who are going to pay you money to help keep you in the manner to which you have become accustomed, so don't insult them by sending out anything that isn't as perfect as you can make it. This means that you must proof read your letter, several times, before sending it out. You'd be amazed at just how easy it is to read what you meant to write, instead of what you've actually written. This is why it's also a good idea to have someone else read your letter before it goes out.

It's fine to be informal, in fact, it's better than the corporate

jargon that passes for language in many large companies, but this doesn't mean that you can be careless or sloppy. You still need to choose your words with care, so that the message is clearly conveyed. It's also important to read your message aloud, to make sure it sounds right and that it flows easily.

Check for repetition in words and phrases, sometimes, repetition can be used effectively to emphasise certain key points, but repetition that is simply the result of laziness is not good. The following example (from an article by Bill Gates) shows an effective use of repetition:

"If the 1980s were about quality and the 1990s were about reengineering, then the 2000s will be about velocity. About how quickly the nature of business will change. About how quickly business itself will be transacted. About how information access will alter the lifestyle of consumers and their expectations of business."

This one is not effective:

"Whizzo cleaners are great and give a great finish to all surfaces. Give your whole house a great new look with Whizzo."

The final point to consider is the timing of your message.

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Even though we live in a global village now and day is night and night is day, it's still possible to time when your prospects will receive your message. Studies have shown that people are most receptive to new messages mid-week, so aim to have your letter or e-mail arrive on Wednesday or Thursday.

Jennifer Stewart has had her own web-based business at <http://www.write101.com> since 1998, offering professional writing services for business people who can't spare the time to write. If you need sales letters, but feel you couldn't write your way out of a wet paper bag, try this: <http://www.write101.com/letters/sales>

### **Great Communication Skills**

**By Colin Ong TS**

Having good communication skills in the workplace is important. This article will provide tips to take into account a rapidly changing workplace.

Details of the message:

It is important that you first check the authenticity of the message before you start to communicate with your office colleagues. Has the message been transmitted from a reliable source or was it something that you just read in the newspapers? Good communication skills will enable you to be more credible and reliable – but it is as good as the contents of your message.

Don't change the message:

Some people are fond of providing their personal input about a message. Problems will arise if the receiver unknowingly accepts the message with the input as the "total package". This may cause confusion and misunderstanding in the workplace.

Get to the point:

A similar point is to keep the message short. It is good to provide bulleted headings and paragraphing if the message is long and detailed.

Information or Feedback?:

As many workplaces are fast-paced and activity driven, it is important that you communicate with the receiver if you are sending information or getting feedback. This may not be very apparent if your message is phrased in an open-ended way. An example of this problem is when you say "There will be a meeting on Saturday." Is it compulsory for the receiver to attend?

Sensitive to the environment:

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If you have an important message for the receiver who happens to be making a speech in front of VIPs, how will you communicate? Will you interrupt him in mid-speech by shouting the message across the conference room? This method is definitely not recommended. Instead, you should write out the message and hand it to him without distracting the audience. Most poor communicators are not sensitive to the working environment and place high importance in transmitting the message.

Sensitive to the receiver:

We all have our "off days". Thus it is important to be sensitive to the message receiver, especially if he is your immediate superior and the message is negative. Use your own intuition to time the message so that he will be in a better frame of mind to evaluate the problem. However, this takes a lot of

practice and patience. But your superior will be appreciative of your efforts.

Effective use of email:

It is good practice to send an email if you are unable to contact the receiver. The advantages are obvious; you are able to send an email attachment with your message and there is proof that you have done your part (unless his email account is over-quota!). You can also broadcast the message to a few people so that his colleagues are able to handle the problem if he is away.

Effective use of SMS:

As most people have mobile phones, you should consider using SMS to help in your communication. A suggestion is to send an SMS to inform him that you have just sent an email that requires attention. However, please note that SMS communication may have a time lag, so use it with caution.

Colin Ong TS is the Managing Director of MR=MC Consulting (

) and the

Founder of the 12n Online Professional Networking Community (

)

Great Communication Skills

Remember what your mother told you (Repetition WORKS!)

LED Moving Message Displays

Pagers – How Do They Work?

Creating Marketing Fireworks

ScrollPops

IP Ad WebSender – The Ultimate Promotion Tool

Clickbank Automation System

Mind Power Creative Thinking  
Carefully Crafted Sales Emails And Web Copy



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