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Key Headline Qualities -- 6 Keys To Surefire Success With Your Headlines

By Robert Boduch

What are the key headline qualities that work every time?

Why do some headlines produce extraordinary results?

Truth is... winning headlines all share the ability to cut through the clutter of competing messages to deliver a hard-hitting, unmistakable message to a specific group of prospects.

Great headlines are those that not only get noticed, but also draw the reader inside with a magic-like spell. Whenever you find yourself reading deep inside the body copy of a message, chances are you were pulled inside by the magnetic appeal of a carefully constructed and targeted headline.

The most successful headlines contain at least one (and many times, several) of the key headline qualities listed below. When writing your own headlines, review this list and make sure you're on target.

Key Headline Qualities -- #1: Great Headlines Are Arresting. Job one for any headline -- whether it's a display ad, brochure, or sales letter -- is to arrest attention. Without first capturing the eyes of your prospects, your message doesn't stand much of a chance. Without a powerful, concise message, prospects will be gone elsewhere, in the blink of an eye.

Living in the midst of the information age, each of us is inundated with a huge, continuous explosion of messages from all directions and an unlimited number of sources. It can be overwhelming at times -- even futile -- when we realize how impossible it would be to pay attention to it all, even with 48 hours to a day!

With this in mind, your headline has to make the reader stop dead in her tracks to ponder your idea, concept, startling statement, or intriguing question. Your headline's mission is to consume your reader's focus, capture her imagination and momentarily mesmerize with your captivating collection of words.

Key Headline Qualities -- #2: Great Headlines Are Interruptive. Customers and prospects are mentally

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pre-occupied with various thoughts of their own. Every prospect is busy living her life. An interruptive headline has the ability to shift the reader's attention and focus from their current thoughts, towards your message. It's a break, a temporary thought suspension that you want to create with your headline.

Being interruptive means being able to get the prospect to shift her concentration with something that is new, timely, or important to her life -- something that is sure to get attention. To pull this off successfully requires a good understanding of your target market and a powerful headline that addresses a deeply held desire or solution to a problem.

Key Headline Qualities -- #3: Great Headlines Are Provocative. The provocative headline is one that instigates a reaction in the reader. It delivers a mental nudge, designed to involve the prospect in some

way. A provocative headline is difficult to ignore -- particularly when it's narrowly focused on a specific audience -- because it tempts, teases, or tantalizes the reader.

Provocative headlines command the attention of those they address by asking questions, delivering surprising or shocking statements, and by establishing a connection to a news story or event.

Key Headline Qualities -- #4: Great Headlines Are Compelling. A compelling headline draws like a magnet because it hits at the heart of the reader's deep desire. These headlines pull the reader inside. They fuel an existing desire for more by offering a huge promise -- something the prospect wants, and wants badly.

The secret to a compelling headline is the suggestion of a payoff of some kind. The closer the match between promised payoff and deeply rooted desire, the more effective the headline will be.

The compelling headline places a powerful thought in the mind of the prospect -- something she cannot easily forget. It stays with her until the desire has been satisfied, (often by placing an order) or, until she loses interest. The anticipation and desire builds so the prospect is literally compelled to stay with the message to satisfy a nagging hunger.

Key Headline Qualities -- #5: Great Headlines Arouse Curiosity. Prospects are pulled inside to the heart of a message by their desire to find out more. Often it's the result of a surprising statement, shocking news, a new discovery, or a new way to solve an age-old problem. The best curiosity-arousing headlines combine curiosity with a major benefit of interest to the prospect.

Once the reader's curiosity has been piqued, her interest naturally intensifies. The more thought she gives to the subject, the stronger the curiosity grows -- as well as the desire to satisfy it. What it all boils down to is greater exposure to your entire message over a longer period of time.

Key Headline Qualities -- #6: Great Headlines Deliver Big Benefits. It's these major advantages or benefits that all buyers want. Benefits represent the true payoff. Benefits answer the "What's in it for me?" question. Every prospect has their built-in radar set to a "benefits-only" frequency. It's the benefits you offer that win the attention and interest of your audience.

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What is it your prospects would like to have or achieve? What problem would your prospect most like to solve? Headlines that present strong benefits are headlines that capture attention and interest. When you speak in terms of benefits, you're speaking your prospect's language.

Implement these key headline qualities in your ad copy and you'll attract a larger, more interested audience.

More resources at

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Robert Boduch is an author of dozens of best-selling books, reports and articles on the art and science of selling. A free newsletter targeted at anyone interested in selling more of anything is available at

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How To Write Good Headlines

By Jean Lam

Headlines are the most important part of your advertisements on the internet. There are so many options available to potential customers that you must grab their attention immediately with a good headline, or they will bypass your ad and go to something else.

Headlines are most important in your e-mail advertising. Readers will scan the e-mail subject line and decide if they want to read the rest of the e-mail.

Tailor your headlines to a specific group that will be interested in what your advertisement has to say. Make your headline specific to the audience you want to target.

You will never get 100% of your audience to pay attention to your ad so target the 5-10% that will potentially read your advertisement. Your headline should be interesting and appealing to your target audience.

Another important aspect of headlines is experimentation. When running an advertising campaign make up 10 to 15 headlines that you feel will work and track your results.

The body of your advertisement can remain the same. You should focus on writing your headlines more than the actual body of your advertisement. Once you can attract the target audience your headline is supposed to reach the body text of your ad will do the work for itself.

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Jean Lam is the editor and publisher of "Web Biz Secrets" E-Magazine. Receive a FREE gift when you subscribe today at

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