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Swipe Your Way To Success (Legally!)

By Paula Morrow

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Every successful direct mail expert has one. Same with the online experts who continually pull in the big numbers.

What is it? The infamous 'swipe file.'
Have you started yours?

Every so often, you're faced with a blank computer screen and a deadline – your ezine is due, your sales letter needs to be posted, your ad needs to be submitted.

And your mental batteries are completely dead. You're suffering from total and complete writers block. But the clock keeps ticking.

This is when you turn to your trusty 'swipe' file for inspiration. For a killer headline idea or theme. For a power word or two.

Now, I'm not saying steal someone else's work, word for word. That's plagiarism, and can get you in a lot of hot water. What you use a swipe file for is inspiration – the catalyst to help jump start your brain.

In the offline world, for those in the know, 'junk' mail is really treasure in disguise. You receive free, every day, new ideas for future pitches. Look through and pull out the offers, the headlines, the pieces that really catch your eye, engage your emotions and make you want to buy.

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Then file them away for that mental rainy day.

Dan Kennedy, I understand, has rows of file cabinets full of these treasures, just waiting to be used.

The online world has the equivalent in spam. Yes, a silver lining for spam! As with junk mail, look at the headlines, look at the offers. Save the ones you feel most powerful.

I have files called 'solo ads,' 'great headlines,' 'new product pitches,' 'pitches for affiliate programs' ... you get the idea.

A Word About Headline Inspiration...

Your headline swipe file is worth its weight in gold. Start building this resource immediately if you've not already done so. The headline is the key to unlocking an email, and some could argue it is the most important part of your offer.

The key is to take a headline from your file and adapt it to your product. When you're drawing a blank, how easy would it be to adapt the following?

38 Fun And Easy Ways to Earn \$500
Next Weekend

7 Steps To Freedom

26 Days That Have Changed Thousands
Of Lives

An Amazing Business You Can Carry In
Your Pocket

Are You An Educated Failure?

Banking Secrets That Banks Don't Want
Published

California Lawyer Discovers How To
Make Money At Home With The Help
Of The U.S. Government

Do you think you could take these, and
plug your product or service in, and get a huge head start?

For example, if you were selling vitamins you could adapt the second sample from the bottom:

Health Secrets That Drug Companies Don't Want Published

Do you have a weight loss product or exercise tape series? Use the first one:

38 Fun and Easy Ways To Lose 2–4 Pounds By Next Weekend

See the process?

Aside from your swipe file, you should also build a list of power words. Words like: free, sell, instant, successful, little known, system, select, explode, unlimited.

Use these words to create a sense of urgency and curiosity.

I've an expanded list posted on the Ideal Marketing Corporation web site, if you want more ideas. Click here to view:

<http://www.idealmarketingcorp.com/powerwords.html>

Creating a killer headline, copy and power word swipe file should be an ongoing process. Keep building yours, as you never know when you'll need that next bit of inspiration.

Paula Morrow heads Ideal Marketing Corporation, specializing in information products and training for newbie netpreneurs. Subscribe to IDEALProfits, now read in 12 countries, and receive 5 bonus ebooks!<http://www.idealmarketingcorp.com/subscribe.html>

How To Ethically Use A "Swipe File" For Your Ad Copy

By David Riewe

Did you ever wish you could afford to hire one of those professional copy writers who charge \$5000 or more to write a simple sales letter? Or worse, have you laid down your hard-earned cash for a self-proclaimed "professional" writer, and gotten back something your 3rd grader could have written?

If you spend countless hours staring at a blank page trying to come up with compelling ad copy for that "killer" sales letter (you know, the one that's going to make you rich beyond your wildest dreams?)... STOP!

Why drive yourself nuts and give yourself a major headache trying to train yourself to be a professional copy writer overnight? Do what the gurus do... start a "swipe file."

That's an unfortunate name, swipe file. It sounds unethical. Please understand, I am NOT condoning

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plagiarism! But every so-called "internet marketing guru" openly admits to having a swipe file that they use when they need a little inspiration.

So what is a swipe file and how do you use it legally and ethically?

Basically, whenever you come across an ad or sales letter that makes you want to run and grab your wallet... stop and print out that copy first! Highlight or circle the parts of the ad that have you excited and eager to make a purchase. Then put it away in a folder or notebook. This is your swipe file.

Eventually, you'll accumulate quite a stack of great professional quality ads. Then, when you're staring at that blank page trying to compose your next ad campaign or sales letter, you can leaf through your swipe file and MODEL your ad copy after some of those ads... but DO NOT copy them word for word. Substitute your own words and put your own stamp on them. Mix and match different approaches from different ads.

Remember, this is meant to be inspirational, not criminal. NEVER out and out copy these ads. Just analyze how the ad is structured, what TYPES of words are used, and then create your own UNIQUE sales copy by emulating the successful advertising techniques from your swipe file.

The idea is to study copy writing techniques as you go. Eventually, you'll find you won't need to refer to your swipe file as often. Your blank pages won't stay blank for long because you'll have learned how to write killer ad copy of your own! You learn best by doing it. Then it becomes second nature.

Who knows? Maybe you'll get so good at writing sales copy that soon other people will be adding YOUR work to THEIR swipe files!

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