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Tantalizing Headlines: Do's and Don'ts

By Marcia Yudkin

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Put yourself in the position of a newspaper or magazine editor scanning the newswires and the day's email and faxes for relevant content. How would you rate the following headlines, actually found on the Internet:

New Slaves in America

HP Wheels Out Year-long Tour Bringing Digital Adventure Directly to Consumers

Little Kids Re-introduces Sqwish Ball Adding Shimmer to the Sqwish!

>From the editor's perspective, all three of these headlines stink, because they do not make sufficiently clear what the release is about. The first of the three is the worst, because anyone thinking it concerns human ownership of other humans will roll their eyes upon learning that the release touts a book claiming to "break the chains of economic bondage" through knowledgeable investing.

The second runs aground through its use of the mysterious phrase, "digital adventure." In fact, it plugs a traveling exhibition of three truck-mounted houses containing digital cameras, printers and musical devices. The third headline stays away from complete disaster only because the company name, Little Kids, happens to signal what the product in question is: a kid's toy.

Tantalizing Headlines: Do's and Don'ts

Unlike readers looking at headlines in their favorite periodical, editors and other media gatekeepers are not charmed by cute or obscure headlines. Anything mysterious gets in the way of their task at hand, finding the raw material to turn into articles for their audience. If the headline doesn't answer their three paramount questions – What is this? Who is it for? And where is the news significance? – they don't have time or inclination to click through and investigate further.

Understanding the mindset of those culling through press releases will help you craft informative headlines. If you

need a lot of words to write a clear headline, go ahead. A good guideline is to include as many of journalism's classic "Five W's" in the headline as you can: who, what, when, where and why or how. To address editors' top three concerns, make sure you specify what you're promoting, who would care about it and what makes it newsworthy.

To return to the three unfortunate examples found online, we can fix the first specimen along these lines:

The New Underground Railroad, New Book, Helps Free Wage Slaves from Bondage With a Beginner's Introduction to Stocks, Bonds and Investing.

The second headline improves with a few more details:

HP Wheels Out Year-long Traveling Exhibition of Truck-Mounted Homes Filled with Digital Photography, Computing and Entertainment Products.

And the annoyance factor disappears from the third headline when we revise it as follows:

Little Kids Updates Squish Ball, Specialty Toy from the 1990's for Age 5 and Up, With a Holographic Shimmer.

If after adding clarity, you can also inject some wordplay or fun into the headline, go ahead. But media people giving your headlines just three or four seconds of attention aren't really looking for entertainment. They're on a hunt for relevance, and cuteness runs the danger of getting in their way.

Holiday Beauty Do's and Don'ts

By Lorene Radenz

Why is it that whenever you go to a holiday party, you can always find someone who doesn't look how you would expect? Is it because you think they overdid their fashion or make-up, or is it a touch of envy?

Beauty queen or fashion disaster, it's up to you. If you want to shine for the holidays, take note of these do's and don'ts to spruce up your look and receive raves from your friends and family.

Beauty Do's

Do Experiment.

Check out the latest in make-up and fashion trends and give them a try. This will update your look and chances are, you'll find something that enhances your skin tone and flatters your figure.

Do accentuate your finer features.

Play up your best features while drawing attention away from your problem areas. For example, do you have sleek shoulders but think your hips are too wide? Wear a sexy off-the-shoulder dress to show off your finer assets.

Do consult professionals.

If you're the do-it-yourself kind of gal, you can benefit from professional opinions now & then. Why not get a makeover for the holidays? Keep in mind, salons are booked tightly for the holiday season, so call well in advance for your appointment and use your time in the waiting room looking through magazines for updated hairstyles and fashion that best suit you.

Do simplify your beauty routine.

Unless you're headed out to a holiday party, forgo unnecessary extras that take up valuable time. Keep your hairstyle simple and make-up to natural colors that will look good with anything you wear.

Beauty Don'ts

Don't be afraid of change.

Dazzle your friends with a new look. Whether it's a new hairstyle, hair color, or just a dress, you'll get attention! Think of it this way, models look different for every shoot and are very versatile. Don't they always look great?

Don't wear too much make-up.

Tantalizing Headlines: Do's and Don'ts

There's a fine line between a little extra holiday pizzazz or downright heavy makeup. Choose colors that compliment your face and blend it in well. Double check your face in bright lights before heading out the door.

Don't forget accessories.

Add the finishing touch to your overall appearance. The holidays are festive, so glam it up with accessories and jewelry. Splurge on that handbag you've been wanting and don't feel the least bit guilty.

Don't let stress get the better of you.

It's no secret that the holidays can be most stressful time of the year. Use your time wisely and learn to say "no." Your face can easily reveal stress and lack of sleep, so designate some of your duties to family members and be sure to get your beauty rest.

Lorene Radenz is a freelance writer and the founder of

– Your

All-In-One Beauty Guide.

Holiday Beauty Do's and Don'ts

Bed Wetting Do's and Don'ts for Parents

Create your headline to DRAW the OPTIMUM results.

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