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The Classified Challenge: Sell Within Seconds

By Lisa Lake

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Classified advertising is a marketing method that's hundreds of years old. In the last digital decade online classified advertising has exploded. You can reach millions of readers within seconds after creating and posting an ad. It's an inexpensive way to market yourself, your service, or your product, and your customer comes LOOKING FOR YOU when reading classifieds. Yet too few of them score. Why not? They're vague. They don't sell within seconds.

Read through 20 or 30 online classifieds and you'll agree the best ones stand out in three ways. They inform, they entice, or they challenge the reader. This draws the reader into the ad immediately, likely ending with a phone call or website hit or better yet, a sale. Good classified ads needn't do all three. But they succeed in one of these – informing, enticing, or challenging the reader — and they get started right away with a strong headline.

Let's look at a couple of online classified categories to find some bombs and to find some winners. I chose 'Business Opportunities' for its sheer size online (huge), and 'Weddings', under Services.

Classified readers are exposed to loads of poorly written ads in the Business Opportunities section. "Earn BIG BUCKS!!!" "Opportunity Knocking!" "Money Making Opportunity." "Don't Pass This Up!" "Earn Unbelievable Income This Week!" "Home-Based Business Opportunity." That last one does inform us, and you might even picture yourself working in your basement in your

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plaid bathrobe; the problem is there are HUNDREDS of others today with the same headline. What is something SPECIFIC about the business opportunity you want to share with others?

On the other hand, the following ads are informative, telling me right away about the nature of the opportunity. "Book Travel >From Home." "NOT MLM." "Save 80% On Dental Services." "Order Processor – Work From Home." "Own Your Own Casino Website."

I realize with the boom in online business opportunities, daily there are more and more of each of these examples of work opportunities available. So entice your reader. These are

pretty persuasive: "Flock To Record-Breaking Company!" "Moms, Say Good-bye To Daycare!" And, "Follow A Proven Plan To Success."

Or challenge your reader. "On A Mission Moms?" "Serious Money For The Serious Minded" challenges the experienced entrepreneur to stand up and be noticed. He might say to himself, 'I'm smart, I've been around the block a few times; so I'll read your ad to see if YOU'RE serious.' A retired person without a lot of technical experience but who is curious about online businesses might respond to the headline "Easy Set-Up" by saying, 'You mean even I could do it? Tell me more.'

After you write your all-important headline, or simply approve it after having an expert do it for you, ask yourself, would Joe Reader read on?

Say you're planning a wedding. My mother did everything for me while I exercised furiously to fit into a size 8 gown. But lots of women are marrying later now, planning for the biggest day of their lives themselves – often online. Your audience here is educated, sophisticated, and probably particular. Vague headlines like the following are of no help to them whatsoever. "Getting Married?" "Florist." "Photographer For Hire."

Do those inform? Do they entice me, tempt me to scan the entire ad? Do they test the reader with an I-dare-you-to-read-on headline?

Here are ads that inform the reader right away, selling their service or product within seconds: "Music Matters DJ Service." Hey, if music is important to you, if you want more than an old

harpist at your reception, wouldn't you keep reading? "Wedding Photography Candid Style." This photographer specializes in warmth, more than the usual posed photos in front of the altar. You might instantly picture a shot of the bride holding her worn-out little flower girl on her lap, or maybe a shot of her dancing with her blushing young nephew. And I love this one: "Budget? Stress? Free Wedding Manual." That gets to the point and directs the right market to read on: cheapos, girls paying for their own second wedding, girls like me whose father had four daughters to marry off. Another: "Best Price In Town For Photo & Video."

Or ads can entice the reader to consider something special AND something specific for their wedding. "Great Private Weddings On San Antonio Riverwalk." (Can't you feel the river mist, hear the music streaming out of nightclubs, smell the enchiladas?) How about, "Elegant Horse and Carriage" or "Hand-made Wedding Veils." Ooh, wouldn't that be lovely? The reader will read on

if it's a match. And because weddings are sentimental, and it's not a lawnmower for sale here, I chose to keep reading this one: "The Sights and Sounds of Your Wedding." The body of the ad gave great, specific information like, 'Don't let your wedding be a hazy memory. Our video packages include multi-camera coverage of the preliminaries, ceremony, and reception.'

Lastly, this ad challenges the creative wedding planner: "Hire Elvis For Your Wedding!" He's asking you if you're really brave enough to throw a truly WACKY wedding, while at the same time giving you an immediate mental picture of the thing.

Classified ads are useful, easy to use, and quick. Readers can search locally or nationally, and by specific category. (The San Antonio Riverwalk wedding ad ran within Texas, for example.) Online classified ads are very affordable and reach millions of readers. So use them, but write them wisely. Remember how? Inform, entice, or challenge – starting with the headline.

Lisa Lake started out writing classified ads for a big newspaper. Now she helps people market their products, services, and ideas with low-cost ads across the Internet. See her "no-work" ad placement service at <http://MyAdBlaster.com> Reach Lisa at atlisa@drnunley.com or 801-328-9006.

Challenge Coin Display Cases And Challenge Coins Tips

By Paton Jackson

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I find it amazing that the interest and popularity of challenge coins and challenge coin displays keeps rising. I get many questions about military challenge coins so I have decided to gather some valuable tips for you.

The most popular challenge coins are navy challenge coins, marine corps challenge coins, army challenge coins, air force challenge coins and police challenge coins. Which one do you prefer?

Challenge coins are more precious than one can imagine - they usually worth a couple of bucks, but they have a sentimental value no one can evaluate. That's way; you must protect your military challenge coins by using a challenge coin display case.

Buy a challenge coin display that totally answers your needs:

1. One that will make you proud of your challenge coins collection - Some have dozens of challenge coins from navy challenge coin, marine corps challenge coins and army challenge coin to air force challenge coins and police challenge coins. A collection like this could be really impressive.
2. One that will fully protect your challenge coins - Most of the challenge coin display cases have a plastic capsule for each individual coin.

I find the military challenge coins a bit magical. Did you know that no one can point exactly when the first challenge coin was made? Some say that the first one is date to World War 1. Others say that the first military challenge coin is from the Vietnam War.

I believe that people are just starting now to understand the real value of challenge coins. A good investment would be purchasing as many different challenge coins as you can. They are going to be an expensive collectible item in a few years.

But one should remember that a challenge coin represents values before everything - support to the organization minted on the coin whether it is a navy challenge coin, marine corps challenge coin or any other organization.

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