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The Damaging Admission--a Persuasive Technique

By Matthew Cobb

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We would all like to think that our product or service is flawless. More importantly, we would like for others to believe that as well. But no matter what you sell, a drawback (sometimes several) will always exist, even if only in the mind of your reader--prospects. Either way, you MUST address the issue up front. In fact, if written properly, "the damaging admission" can actually be used to your advantage.

Too many times, sales letters attempt to convince reader--prospects that there's nothing wrong with the product or service...that it is absolutely perfect. This kind of hyperbole will actually persuade some people, but your credibility will suffer with more others. There's nothing wrong with positioning your product or service to sound better than the competition, but to position it as perfect is a huge mistake. Admit your fault(s). Just be sure to show their real significance (or lack of) in proportion to the overall purchase.

A damaging admission must be 1) credible and 2) useful.

A damaging admission is only credible if it's real-- no product is perfect, so you shouldn't have to make up a damaging admission. Work-at-home opportunities are notorious for poor persuasive techniques, many to this effect: "Hey, we understand that some people don't want to make more money. That's okay--this new program isn't for everyone. It's only for those who want a steady stream of residual income." That's a ridiculous statement and it isn't even a real argument. I don't know anyone who wouldn't like to make more money. Making up a false negative only hurts your image.

A damaging admission is often used to exclude (or appear to exclude) potential customers who might be turned off by the facts related to the admission. This can be useful for eliminating time-wasting "tire kickers."

For example, if your product is expensive (but not prohibitively so for your target audience) then say so up front. Explain that the price is high, but that quality, customer service, etc., makes up for the price

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and even saves money over the life of the product. This will exclude many people who have no real intention of buying but still want more information. Plus, a higher price often creates the perception of increased value.

(If you decide to use price as a damaging admission, make sure your product will stand up to the test after the purchase, or be prepared to see sales drop off quickly.)

A damaging admission can be used to demonstrate a reason for a discount. Consider a recent example in the Dallas/Fort Worth area: a few days after a hailstorm, a local car dealership advertised lowered prices as part of a "hail sale." Their "damaging admission" was that many of the cars had been marked by the hail, so the dealership was forced to offer the cars at discount prices.

Were these cars really damaged? Perhaps, perhaps not. Either way, the dealership seized the opportunity to use a "damaging admission" to their advantage and have a special sale. The success of

the campaign would depend on whether the damaging admission was credible. Were the discounts proportional to the supposed hail damage? If not, customers might think they'd been fooled. Because there was an actual hailstorm, however, the admission was probably accepted as credible.

When you write a sales letter, you're engaging in a one-sided conversation. You can't be present to answer any objections the reader might have and you can't be there to respond to concerns about your credibility. Make sure your sales letter does this for you.

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Using Low Grades As Assets In Admission Essays For College Or Mba School

By Thomas Suh

You are seriously aiming to apply to the college or business school of your choice. You have taken the required tests, and now, you are ready for the grueling application process. In particular, you need to pay attention to the College Admission Essay, or MBA essay as part of your application, since the college admission essay or MBA essay allows you to explain certain weaknesses in your grades. Many colleges and universities still have reservations on admitting applicants whose school records contain grades that they consider low as per their standards. And this is your big dilemma. How to explain your low grades. This is where the College Admission Essay or MBA essay will play a vital role.

In cases where you unfortunately received a bad grade, the best thing to do is to give a valid and

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genuine reason. Do not ignore it, but address it head on. In the college admission essay or MBA essay you have the golden opportunity to explain your low grades and provide rational reasons on why these grades are not necessarily reflective on your potential as a student. Offer a specific example to explain your side of the issue. For instance, you can say that personal problems (sick family member or unexpected accident) kept you from focusing more on your studies.

Just try to keep in mind that your aim in your explanation in the admission essay or MBA essay is not to make excuses nor create tall tales to cover the fact that you have a low grade in one or two subject areas. The goal is to emphasize the reality that the bad grade was not because you failed to study but because circumstances were simply beyond your control. Make it a point to stress that it was just a temporary setback and that overall, your school record is still academically excellent, and that you are worthy of admission to the school of your choice. In fact, you may want to explain how such unexpected experiences actually made you into a better person, a more mature and understanding person, who now appreciates life more and is more driven than ever before. Your primary goal should be to convey to the reader that you are a better person as a result of your personal experiences, which in turn make you a better candidate for admission.

Also, remember that different schools place different weights on test scores or grades and may emphasize your college admission essay or MBA essay instead. Rather, they look more into your extracurricular activities since the approach of their program is the total development of an individual. In such cases, lower grades may not be as crucial in the admissions process, but you should still aim to explain them as best as you can, and doing so can best be done in the College Admission Essay or MBA essay.

For more valuable information about the MBA Essay or the Collge Admission Essay, please visit

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