

"The Psychology Of Scarcity – Less Is More If You Want Faster Sales From Your Web Copywriting"

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By Dave Alston

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Countdown to Armageddon – at least you'd think so judging from some of the garish copy and blaring headlines screaming at you from so many websites.

At the opposite extreme though, you've some sites which don't even have a single decent headline anywhere that captures visitors attention, let alone leads them into captivating copywriting that'll get them a sale.

Although it's true to say human emotion hasn't changed in the last 10 years online, the consumer and buyer reactions have undoubtedly become far more sophisticated over the past decade. Further, with something like 43% of all web shopping carts being abandoned at the point of sale it's crucial we understand and react proactively to this new buyer sophistication.

In short, today's online buyers are both pretty wired and wised up. Unless you understand this and adjust your offering accordingly your headlines are very likely to drive prospective clients away rather than entice them into your copy for a second look if they've even a sniff of hype about them or just plain bore them silly.

Either of the above extremes is obviously counter-productive but rather than opting for a bland 'middle way' approach to your copywriting or headlines, here's a sure fire way to generate intensely gripping copy that rivets even ultra sophisticated buyers to every word you publish. It keeps them spellbound all the way down your pages until they've executed your desired marketing action – either opting in, clicking through to a new page or making a purchase without dumping the cart.

If you want these type of results then use "The Psychology Of Scarcity" and you'll soon have these new 'sophisticats' under your marketing spell and more importantly, get them buying what you sell.

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Here's exactly how it works...

The basic underlying principle is widely known of course, and springs from the proven psychological response people give when they're denied or given limited access to something they intensely desire.

Basically, when people are told they can't have something they want it all the more. As a result incredibly powerful emotions are released which go on to drive actions often deemed irrational under normal circumstances. As marketers we can take advantage of this almost primitive reaction (ethically of course) to bypass even sophisticated buyers resistance and go on to make the sale.

Here's a further demonstration to show powerful this is...

Imagine for a moment tonights TV news announces a grave national emergency and petrol (gas) is to be strictly rationed to one just full tank for your car for an entire month... but this rationing won't start

until one weeks time. However, you are not allowed to stockpile petrol because that's bad.

Now I don't know about you honourable folks but almost instantly a picture of my storeroom stacked to the ceiling with Jerry cans full of petrol popped into my mind! I'm not saying I'd do that if this was a true scenario but I'd probably have a couple of cans laid aside, just for emergencies of course. At the pumps and service stations there would be a stampede, because the psychology of scarcity would release these deep emotional responses. This actually happened here in UK two years ago and there was mayhem.

Now let's see if we can insert a mechanism deep into our headlines and online copy that'll immediately invoke exactly the same kind of emotional responses within those who visit our sites. If we can then all the sophistication in the world won't stop our visitors from reaching for their credit cards to buy what we sell. We're looking for the response that comes directly from the gut – that's not filtered out by the sophisticated mind. That's where we aim our copy at, the heart not the head.

The type of mechanisms we've found work best in invoking these emotion driven responses are as follows...

1) Strictly limit the amount of product you are selling in each promotion, put it right up front in the headline or first sentence where everyone can see it and strictly adhere to your statement. If you say you've only got 100 widgets to sell, then pull the promo when you reach that point or people will see the whole thing as a facade. Here in the UK the richest sofa and 3 piece suite supplier uses this technique very well, although now after 2 years we're all beginning to see through these 'promo weekend specials', so be wise when you use it.

Make your product scarce... because then you make it valuable and desired in others eyes.

2) Set time sensitive deadlines that really do expire – Set a deadline for the promo to finish and give a special discount on the product if purchased before that time. When you reach that day pull the promo headlines, ad, the lot. People will heed what you say and buy far quicker next time you set a deadline.

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I've done it myself, got to a site with expired deadline and missed out, next time I paid far more attention to their pitch and the website gained credibility in my eyes.

3) Use number limits for recruiting headlines – when recruiting people for sales teams, affiliates etc use figures that limit the amount of people you 'appear' to wish to recruit. For example use a headline portion including "We urgently require 5 key individuals for our new IT project...". At the same time as limiting the opportunity here you also give each individual a glimmer of hope that they'll be among the 'chosen few' to land the rare but rather plum project.

4) Bundle extra products, services, customer support along with your product they'd not normally get, especially from your competition. This is also a good way to get affiliate sales. Your visitors realise they can't get the 'extra's from other affiliate sites so they buy from your affiliate link. Your product becomes 'value enhanced' and in the marketplace where there are thousands doing the same thing, yours is perceived as valuable because of the rare extras bundled with it.

Think of it – you're giving chips (fries) along with the main event for free, your competitors aren't, who will buyers go with?

5) Give special 'insider access' passes or memberships to the first 20 respondents etc or if your visitors order before a deadline. You increase value and evoke quick response by limiting the number of

memberships available. Tell folks at the same time – "... in a few days our national advertising campaign will be rolled out and these 20 memberships are likely to be snapped up within minutes, order now to secure yours." etc.

6) Give forward dated 'Future Proofed' Discount Vouchers for future product releases – for example, "Buy a X widget right now at £199.00 and you'll get our brand new Y software at £99.00 when we release it next month. That's a whole £100.00 off the Y software retail price of £199.00. Lock this discount in today by buying your X widget NOW and save yourself a whole £100.00."

Then make this offer even more powerful by number limiting this 'future' offer too. Say something like "Obviously we can't make this offer available to everyone or our profits on next months new release would be affected but we would like to say a special 'thank you' to you as a valued client if you've bought an X widget. As a result we're willing to give you a very special £100.00 discount on the new Y software, but sadly we can only offer this to the first 50 respondents for the reason I mentioned earlier. Please act now and purchase your X widget and I'll be happy to lock in your special £100.00 Y software discount right now.

7) Show dramatic visual countdowns to increase the sense of scarcity – when running a promo that limits purchasers to say 50 copies of a book or manual, special health clinics etc then countdown the progress of the sales before your prospects eyes. On Monday at the start of the promo you only had 47 left, a week later 24, then 12, 7, 3 etc. This is very gripping and effective in any industry.

When you make your product so scarce it literally disappears before visitors eyes they want it all the more. Nowadays you can get little javascript codes to insert into your pages, or pop ups to make this 'live' countdown seem very real indeed and it's extremely effective.

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8) Add value to your product by tying a celebrity name to it – for example "Aretha Franklin swears by our nutritional vitamin syrup because she says it makes her feel like she's seventeen again and protects her vulnerable vocal chords so she can sing like an angel..."

Other nutritional syrups are basically the same but yours would be the only one used and endorsed by a famous celebrity. It may not be possible to get Aretha Franklin but with a little imagination you're likely to be surprised at the folks you could team up with like this. Their end of the deal is they get extra exposure, or even a share in the sales from the promo you run.

9) Tie up with other related business owners and run a dual promo offering a unique 'Double Whammy' product – As an example a specialist seat cover maker could do something along the lines of...

"Order One Set Of Super Soft Custom Leather Car Seat Covers and our friends at Alloy Wheel Kings will give you a full set of alloy wheels at 50% discount. Obviously this is such an incredible deal we can only afford to let the first 25 respondents participate in this promotion which we expect to be sold out by next wednesday. Please book your covers now – click here"

NB: You really need to give such a humdinger of a deal to make this kind of offer fly off the page – 15% off the alloys example above wouldn't be enough. If the owner of 'Alloy Wheel Kings' feels there's not enough profit in the deal by giving away 50% on the alloys then you'd offer to enhance his profit by building in some extra 'fat' in the price of your 'Super Soft Custom Leather Car Covers'. You get the picture, but remember the better the offer the faster it flies.

The best part about this type of special 'dual deal' is you create a very scarce and unique product in your market which your competition don't have. Sure there may be thousands of car seat cover manufacturers but none that also bundle in superb alloys with their deals. That'd make you stand out in a crowded marketplace wouldn't it?

Okay that's enough for now, I'm sure you get the idea.

Hopefully this sprinkling of 'scarcity' mechanisms will inspire you to employ them in your own headlines and throughout your web copywriting. You don't need to be garish or loud or use screaming titles etc to get your message across and get serious buyers reading. If you state simply and clearly, a genuinely scarce commodity is available to a hungry targeted market who you know beforehand want what you have, and you strive as your copy continues to make it almost literally 'disappear before their eyes', folks won't stop reading, and if you've done it correctly they'll order at the end... sophisticated or not. Remember, you've got to get them 'in the gut' bypassing the intricate sales filters of your prospects minds, and this is one of the very best ways to do it – try it and enjoy watching what happens.

Dave Alston is the Author of 'Revealed: The Hidden Truth About Web Design' and owner of <http://www.aceofwebs.com> – small business web success driven by crystal clear copywriting. Subscribe to his 'Ace Tips' marketing RSS feed by copying and pasting <http://www.aceofwebs.co.uk/rss/wp-rss2.php> into your RSS Reader.

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Bencivenga, Halbert And Lok: The 3 Greatest Copywriters In The World!

By Marketing Basics

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No other element of marketing will make your business succeed or fail faster than your copywriting. Good copywriting can earn you a fortune. Bad copywriting will sink your business faster than the Titanic!

However, rather than write an article on how to write great copy, we decided to let three of the greatest copywriters of all time show you how it's done.

Listed below are the links to the websites of Gary Bencivenga, Gary Halbert and Dan Lok. If you want to learn how to write great copy, we can assure you, nobody does it better than these three professionals. They are truly in a class by themselves!

We suggest you carefully study their work, word for word, read their newsletters and glean as much information as you can from their materials. You simply won't get a better or more valuable copywriting education anywhere. Here are the links. Enjoy!

Gary Bencivenga: <http://bencivengabullets.com/>

Gary Halbert: <http://www.thegaryhalbertletter.com>

Dan Lok: <http://www.quickturnmarketing.com/>



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