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Think Big

By Nicole Shields

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When we are marketing ourselves, we sometimes forget about how much we know and who might be interested in learning from us. We tend to focus on the same methods, markets and style we have always used – and we tend to always get the same results.

An investment advisor, Tim had spent 15 years in the financial investment field and was doing pretty well for himself. Although he was pleased with his income and had always taken an aggressive approach to marketing, he knew he could promote his services better.

In addition to his monthly newsletter that he mailed to clients which highlighted changes in the market, tips for specific financial goals, hot picks, reminders about how often to evaluate your financial portfolio, etc. he decided to approach his local cable company about hosting a show called "Investment Insights." The cable company thought it was a great idea and aired it on the local access channel.

Tim was surprised at how many current clients saw the show and how many new clients he picked up from people who had seen it and liked what they heard. He found this was a great medium which allowed him to not only share his expertise, but share his personality with prospective clients. This has always been a stumbling block for many financial advisors as trust and credibility are major issues when picking someone to manage your investments. Tim found that the people who called his office for free reports or other resources he mentioned on his show did not need to be convinced or courted as long because

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they felt that they already knew him. He was able to turn them into clients much quicker.

Because of the cable access show, Tim has been asked to be a guest on several radio shows (some national) and to write an ongoing "Investment Insights" column for the local paper. He's become the town's investment guy. Everyone knows who he is, what he does and how to reach him. The best part, he has not spent any money on advertising. He has invested many hours, but hasn't had to open his check book once to become Big in his community.

What can you do to Think Big in your community or industry?

Maybe you could:

- *Offer free white papers
- *Host a cable show
- *Host a radio show
- *Hold a seminar

Thinking Big can make you big! Just ask Tim.

Three Big Ol' Tips for Better Sales Letters

By Matthew Cobb

Growing up in the South, I used the phrase "big ol'" a lot. Big ol' truck. Big ol' house. Big ol' party. The phrase was one we used when the word "big" just wasn't descriptive enough.

I think the following suggestions qualify as Big Ol' Tips. Look around the Web and you'll find plenty of good sales letter writing tips. But "big" just doesn't do these justice.

Here are three big ol' tips for better sales letters.

Big Ol' Tip #1)

Be redundant. Then, say the same thing over again.

Just because you state your most powerful benefit in the headline doesn't mean you shouldn't say it over again. If you are writing a long sales letter (especially one made for quick scanning), you should repeat the main benefits to make sure you get your point across. After all, many readers need to read the same thing several times before they catch on.

Big Ol' Tip #2)

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Focus on the guarantee. I promise you won't regret it.

Your readers are reading for one very simple reason: they're looking for a reason to buy. Give them the best reason possible. One good reason for buying is the assurance that customers will be protected against making a bad decision. If they're interested in your product, and making a purchase has no negative consequences, then you've got a sale. A guarantee removes negative consequences.

Big Ol' Tip #3)

Conceal the price. How? I'll tell you in a minute.

Don't state the price up-front. Reveal the price only after the customer calls a number, sends in a reply card, makes contact by e-mail, or reads (or scans) all the way to the end of your sales letter. By not revealing the price immediately, you have a chance to demonstrate to readers the value of what's behind the price before they have a chance to set their mind against it. (Note: If low price is your product's primary selling point, this tip might not apply. Test and see.)

These tips will improve your sales letter by making it more readable, more persuasive, and less intimidating to your audience. Use them in a well written piece and you'll see a big ol' increase in your response rates.

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