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Top 7 Rules Broken by Newsletter Advertisers

By Wild Bill Montgomery

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I write a lot of articles about copywriting and marketing on the Internet. I have always believed you're best at what you love to do, if you spend your time doing what you love. Here are what many may believe are obvious rules, but these are the 7 rules I have most often seen broken. Since I'm far.. very, very far from perfect, many of these rules I have repeatedly broken myself as well.

Knowing the rules does not necessarily mean following the rules. Read, Recite, Retain and Recycle. 4 words a previous professor used 1000 times. He constantly stressed the point, and I quote, "Just because you've read it in the book young blood, doesn't prove you've learned a thing.

1. Know your Audience.

The first rule of advertising is to know your Audience or better put, "Target Audience". Know where and how to find them. I know this seems to be a simple and quite obvious rule, but never a day goes by that I don't see it broken. I read and scan approximately 10-20 newsletters each day, and each day I see those ads, thinking to myself, "what are they doing here"?

OK, maybe you will find someone reading a B2B newsletter that is interested in Antique Crystal, but don't you think your efforts and advertising budget would be better served finding a newsletter on Antiques? You may even gain exposure to a businessperson who likes old crystal, but more than likely they don't have that on their mind at the time. Now, I may be a little on the dramatic side, but you get the point. Know where your advertising will best suit the readers and their present state of mind.

2. How do I really know they have that many subscribers?

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Well friend, I may be cutting my own throat here just a little (as I use an email publishing program of my own design), but the one sure way to know, is to advertise with newsletters who use a neutral service such as eGroups or Topica . There are many services free and paid. Some editors also use a bonded service that tracks and guarantees an honest count of a subscriber base. Being what I consider a small fish yet, I do not yet worry that much about the advertising quite that much. I don't yet use a service of any kind. At the present I'm more interested in gaining a loyal readership, than selling advertising. That's not to say I don't sell advertising, I just don't push it that hard....yet. But what it comes down to is that if the newsletter doesn't use an

independent service that keeps and displays the subscriber count, then you have to rely on trust. Trust, my friend, can sometimes be a hard thing to come by these days.

3. Avoid Nuisance Publications.

This could be anything from an opt-in ad list, to solo-ads, to a monthly service mailing. Although many of these have large, sometimes very large subscriber bases, they get a great deal of no-show readers. These are publications that quite often get deleted by a large portion of the people receiving them. I get them all the time. How many other opt in advertisers do you think really read those endless emails of advertising garbage.

Solo ads do get read, but think about it, how many do you read? I may read 1 out of 50. As soon as I see a Solo Ad or any of those other names they're given I delete on contact! What about you? You do get premium space and exposure, if enough people read them, but after talking to other webmasters, I found that a great deal of them usually delete them without ever being read. So consider what you have to pay for that premium space, and that probably only 10% of the people see it.

Suppose you sign up for a free service and one of the stipulations is that you agree to receive their "occasional" mailings. You know; those are the ones you receive every month, week or even daily that you tolerate only because you enjoy the privilege of their service. If you are deleting these, how many other subscribers do you feel may be doing the same?

This is not to say that you won't get a response, but too many of these mailings demand higher rates for their advertising space. You must decide just how much exposure you will really get and whether the price is worth the service.

4. Bad Contact Information Sucks.

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Another obvious but often abused rule. This is as common sense, as common sense can get. Make it easy to respond. I don't know about you, but it really irks me to read and respond to an ad, only to find that there is no such web address or I've emailed an unknown address. Oh well, their loss. I've encountered everything from the misspelling their email or web address to having none at all. I've even seen one Einstein who published his social security number in place of a fax number. Hey, I guess (most of) it happens to the best of us, but it still sucks!

5. How Are Your Headlines, Sunshine?

The main purpose of the headline is to gain attention! People scan newsletter advertising the same way they flip through the pages of a newspaper. They most often are trying to avoid reading your advertising. The key to the headline is to catch their eye before they get by you, to make

them stop and read what you have to say. How do you stop those quick, averting eyes? Well, everyone has his or her own ideas about this.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOLLOWS FOR MEN AND WOMEN OVER 50

This headline promises important news, and if I were over 50, I would have to stop and look. I recently wrote an ad for a friend, with a headline similar to this. The first thing she asked me, was "what about my other clients"? She asked me this even though she knew her product served a certain demographic niche. She herself told me that 75% of her business served men and women over 50. Sounds like great odds to me. After doing some brief research of her business and a few questions, I concluded that her target audience are men and women over 50. I advised her to target this age group. If you get others outside of this demographic category, great! But let's stay focused on where the majority of the business comes from. The rest is icing on the cake!

6. Headlines Won't Help, if they're not seen.

Before buying that ad space, know where that ad will be placed. Unlike the traditional newspaper, digital newsletters vary quite a bit in pricing and placement quality. I would much rather buy a \$20.00 ad at the top of a good newsletter, than spend \$10.00 for two at the bottom of one of the same quality. Ask your editor or webmaster if they can tell you where they will place your paid ad.

Get accustomed to only advertising in newsletters you know or have at least viewed. Do you read the advertising? How many ads will accompany yours? Would you easily find your ad here? Watch and count the amount of ads that

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surface in newsletters you are considering. You don't want your ad lost in a maze of headlines, probably never to be heard from again. If your prospect's advertising quantities fluctuate, again, ask the editor. Many will be courteous enough to offer approximations.

7. Follow Basic Copywriting Rules.

If you're like me, you write your own copy and advertising. There was a time...long, long ago, I had a formal education in business and marketing, so I know (or have hidden away in the cob webs I call a mind) all the old rules and have met many new ones along the way in these last 4 years of being on the Internet. Here are some quick rules on copywriting as it pertains to print and newsletter advertising.

- Appeal to the reader's emotions and instincts.
 - Must convince even the most hardened skeptics.
 - Overcome any objections the buyer may have.
 - Use power words that literally force people to act.
 - Capture and keep the reader's interest.
 - Appeal to the reader's ego and self-interest.
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- Show the facts and proof of your claims.
 - Help the reader justify the purchase.
 - Write copy that coincides with current attitudes in your target group.
 - Motivate you reader to buy NOW.
 - Use "special" benefits to make your product more attractive.
 - Make your reader believe in you.
 - Ad copy must relate and communicate like average people.
 - Know what your target market really wants.
 - Be able to easily lead into your back-end offers
 - Emulate other successful (but not over used) ad copy structures.
 - Make your product so attractive that your reader has no choice but to buy.
 - Write, re-write and re-write and re-write and re-write.....

This article is not meant to cover all the many trials of finding the right newsletters to advertise in, but to help point you in the right direction!

Thanks for reading!

Wild Bill Montgomery ARE YOU SAVING ARTICLES ON YOUR SITE? WANT TO START SAVING TIME AND MONEY! Automate with our "ArticleMaster" Program Today! Visit Us Now and SAVE! Go To

Pay-Per-Click Fraud Exposed--Part II

By Dean Phillips

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According to Andy Jones, a member of the Best Practices Search Engine Forums, fraudulent clicks are just another aspect of the business. "Any of us that use AdWords or any other PPC has to pay for a certain percentage of fraudulent clicks," he said in a forum discussion. "I factor it in as a cost of doing business."

Can you believe that? In other words, he's saying, I know the pay-per-click companies are stealing my money, but it's okay, because I've considered that fact ahead of time.

Unfortunately, that mentality is pervasive among pay-per-click advertisers. No wonder the pay-per-click companies aren't making stopping pay-per-click fraud a top priority. Who can blame them? If their advertisers don't care, why should they? Heck, with all of the money the pay-per-click companies are making, it's actually more cost effective to issue an occasional refund, than to develop technology to eliminate click fraud.

And if you read between the lines of the following statement, Google even admitted as much:

In a recent filing to the Securities and Exchange Commission, Google acknowledged, "We are exposed to the risk of fraudulent clicks on our ads. We have regularly paid refunds related to fraudulent clicks and expect to do so in the future. If we are unable to stop this fraudulent activity, these refunds may increase. If we find new evidence of past fraudulent clicks, we may have to issue refunds retroactively of amounts previously paid to our Google Network members."

That statement doesn't exactly instill any confidence, now does it?

And if Overture is asked about click fraud, they'll just issue their standard company line:

"Our Click Protection System is sophisticated software that evaluates each of our advertisers' clicks. This software makes decisions as to the validity of any click. Our Click Protection System uses search and click data to make both rules-based inferences and pattern recognition-based inferences about which clicks are valid clicks. We have two patents pending related to this technology, so we cannot currently disclose too many details about the methods we use."

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Do you honestly think newspaper, magazine, radio or tv advertisers would just sit back and let those media get away with blatantly stealing their money? You know they wouldn't.

Then why do pay-per-click advertisers allow it? I don't know the exact answer to that question, but I have my theories: First of all, you're talking about a whole different level of sophistication with pay-per-click advertisers, compared to media advertisers. Many pay-per-click advertisers don't even know how to access or even analyze their log files, so they have no idea how much money is actually being stolen from them.

In addition, some pay-per-click advertisers are making more money than they've ever made before. And rather than upset the apple cart, they'd rather keep quiet and allow the vicious cycle of click fraud to continue, so that they can keep cashing those big checks.

I also suspect many advertisers are afraid that if they complain too loudly, they may be penalized in the search engines, in regard to their free listings.

If my theories are accurate, silence is one heck of a trade off, if you ask me. Why? Because according to a report on MediaPost, an online study done by Clicklab revealed that fraudulent clicks can account for more than 50 percent of your total clicks.

So, if the goal of pay-per-click search engines is to bring lucrative, targeted traffic to your web site, what are the pay-per-click search engines doing about the click fraud epidemic, to prevent abuse that needlessly drive up your costs and reduce your ROI?

Unfortunately, since so many pay-per-click advertisers are willing to play the role of "lambs going to slaughter," the pay-per-click companies really don't have to do anything.

In the meantime, your ROI is going to continue to plummet, and the pay-per-click companies are going to continue to milk those cash cows (AKA) pay-per-click advertisers, for all they're worth!



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