



© 2006 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Unauthorized duplication or distribution of this material in any form is strictly prohibited. Violators will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission from the author/publisher.

### **LEGAL DISCLAIMER:**

The author, publisher, and distributor of this product assume no responsibility for the use or misuse of this product, or for any injury, damage and/or financial loss sustained to persons or property as a result of using this report.

While every effort has been made to ensure reliability of the information within, the liability, negligence or otherwise, or from any use, misuse or abuse of the operation of any methods, strategies, instructions or ideas contained in the material herein is the sole responsibility of the reader.

The reader is encouraged to seek competent legal and accounting advice before engaging in any business activity.

# KILLER CONVERSION TACTICS:

## *15 Surefire Ways To Increase Your Sales*

### **Using Headers to Improve Your Sales Page Conversion Rate**

First impressions make a difference and the first thing any visitor to your sales page will see is the header graphic on top of the page. This makes the header a great means by which you can optimize your sales page for maximum conversion.

If you are not using a header on your sales page, you should probably consider doing so. A high-quality header provides an enhanced sense of credibility and serves as a welcoming invitation for the reader to continue. An eye-catching header forms a great first impression and can spur a heightened level of interest about your message.

**There are few essential factors about header use that should be considered:**

#### **Quality**

You are probably better off going “topless” without a header than using a low-quality graphic. Remember, you are trying to create a great first impression and you certainly don’t want the unspoken opening line of your sales pitch to be “I didn’t care enough to do a good job.”

If you aren’t graphically inclined, commission a freelance graphic artist to design a professional header for you.

Alternatively, there are many inexpensive header packages available offering neatly constructed graphics you can customize for header use.

#### **Size**

Although you may run at high speeds using a DSL or cable connection, your potential customer base may still be using dial-up. As such, you will want to make sure to use a well-designed header graphic that loads quickly. Even the best opening graphic will do more harm than good if it

slows your page load speed considerably.

Make sure your page isn't unnecessarily delayed due to the inclusion of a header. There are a variety of free tools available that will simulate load times for multiple connection types, letting you rest assured that you are sending a great message without causing frustrating delays.

## **Theme**

You can't simply slap any header on top of your sales page. Ideally, your header should have some obvious connection to the product or service you are selling.

Don't "force" a header onto your sales page simply because you are impressed with its look. If you are selling an ebook on car auctions, find or produce a car-related header. The captivating header featuring a scenic vista just won't fit your auto auction site.

In addition to graphical consistency, make sure you maintain color and style consistency.

Use headers that introduce and reinforce your message, not ones that tend to contradict it on any level. You want your header to blend seamlessly with the rest of your site.

By focusing on quality, efficiency and thematic consistency, you can increase the effectiveness of your sales page by including a header graphic.

Many visitors will make up their mind about the nature and quality of your sales page only seconds after landing there. **If you can put your best foot forward with a spectacular header, you increase your chances of logging sales considerably.**

---

## You Don't Have to Be Shakespeare, but you can't be Sloppy

Let's take a quick look at a few facts some members of the "grammar police" would prefer to ignore. First, so-called perfect English can look clumsy and can be quite hard to read when printed. **Second, research indicates that minor deviations from some grammatical rules can actually increase the sales potential of your text.**

Now, let's counterbalance those observations with another fact.

Sales are, in large measure, an outgrowth of your ability to create a sense of credibility. Those who are unable to clearly express themselves in writing are often not perceived as having a great deal of credibility.

What can we conclude from all of this?

When you write your sales page, you don't have to be Shakespeare, **but you can't afford to be sloppy.** In other words, there is a fine line between the kind of personal and casual writing that helps to sell products and distracting misuse of language that will make some readers cringe and click away.

Writing a hot sales page, then, is something of a balancing act.

You can't afford to come off as being too stiff or stodgy--that's a turn off to visitors and can make things harder to read. You can't afford to come off as a bumpkin, either. You can play with some rules, but others must be left in place.

What kind of things can you do that your English teacher would have never allowed.

For one thing, you can use fragments.

Lots of them.

That's because research indicates that web users expect them and view them as wholly acceptable. **They also help encourage a friendly tone.**

You can also stop worrying too much about split infinitives or occasional forays into passive voice. If the correct version of a sentence reads better, by all means use it. However, if splitting an infinitive sounds more natural and "feels" better, go right ahead.

**Generally, passive voice should be avoided--sales pages should be active in all sense of the word.** However, when describing some product features you may occasionally find yourself working from the passive voice. When that happens, take a look at how you can correct the problem, but feel free to accept your “official” error if it doesn’t detract from your message.

Frequent use of underlining, bold words and unconventional capitalization sequences are also acceptable.

You can say that one should “**BUY NOW**” instead of imploring them to “buy now,” when the more aggressive tone implied by those capital letters makes sense.

**There are also a few rules you cannot afford to break.**

The first is spelling. Spelling skills may not be an indicator of intelligence, but people are known to perceive them as such. You’ll maximize the effectiveness of your sales page by spelling correctly.

Additionally, try to **keep your perspective consistent.**

This means staying in either the third or first person throughout the sales page, avoiding subject verb disagreement and using parallel construction in your writing when appropriate.

The human mind responds well to written materials that comport with their expectations and perceptions of quality. **Consistency throughout a sales letter helps in this regard.**

You don’t have to be world’s greatest writer to produce a successful sales page, but you do have to be talented enough to make a great impression, to communicate clearly and to inspire confidence.

If you don’t feel your writing is good enough to get the job done, find a professional freelance copywriter or editor to help you.

**Your sales page’s most powerful tools to create results are the words it contains. Choose them carefully.**

## Make it Easy to Spend

How many methods of payment can you accept through your sales page?

Your answer to that question may be a determining factor in its conversion rate. **In order to increase your opportunities to make sales, you must first maximize your potential customers' ability to spend money.**

There's no doubt about it. Right now, PayPal is king.

PayPal is the most commonly used method of online payment and even folks who'd prefer to use a credit card can do so via PayPal. However, it's foolhardy to set up your sales page to only accept Paypal.

### **Here's why you should diversify in terms of payment processors:**

First, not everyone has PayPal. Sometimes they can't get an account due to their country of origin or a past dispute with the company. Many of those individuals without PayPal are still potential buyers who shouldn't be overlooked.

There is also a committed cadre of people who are simply "anti-PayPal" and refuse to use it even if they are able to make purchase via credit card through the service.

Second, PayPal is fallible.

Although it is probably the most reliable payment processor (outside of merchant accounts) available, it can have its problems.

Occasionally, PayPal has been known to freeze accounts when the experience sudden increases in activity. If you are launching a new product, it is wise to have a "back up plan" in place so you need not turn away would-be buyers. You may be able to insulate yourself from that risk by contacting PayPal in advance, **but it always wise to have a "Plan B" in place.**

Third, even some people who do have PayPal may prefer to use an alternate payment system. They already have funds in their account at a different service and would prefer not to make a series of transfers in order to buy your product. **It doesn't make sense to create even a small obstacle for your potential customers.**

Give them the opportunity to spend their money with you, even if getting it set up causes some minor inconvenience for you.

If you can secure a merchant account for credit card processing, you should probably do. If that is not a possibility, you should still seek out payment options other than Paypal and make them available for those who are enticed to buy based on your sales page. **The more options you have, the more chances you have to close a sale.**

Getting a high rate of conversion from your sales page isn't just about the product, how it's offered or how the page itself looks. It's also about making the actual purchasing process as convenient as possible.

Imagine customers ready to spend, but unable to do so. It's a frustrating thought and one that should lead you to take every action possible to avoid it.

---

## Background Colors and their Potential Impact on Sales Page Conversion Rates

There is a variety of factors that can influence the conversion rate of your sales page. Some make a huge difference (like your main headline). Others may produce a noticeable, but more subtle difference (expanding the array of available payment methods, for instance). **Anything you do in terms of the design and display of your sales copy might just have an impact on your sales.**

An example of an often-overlooked part of page design that does appear to influence sales is background color.

The proven single-column long sales letter is usually written on a white (or other light-colored) block and is framed on either side by a colored background. **The choice of color for that background is a controllable variable that has an impact on sales.**

So, what color should you use?

Researchers indicate that the most effective color for a sales page background is dark blue. Other fairly “innocuous” hues such as black, gray and white also perform admirably. **Brighter colors tend to perform at rates lower than those using these neutral background colors do.**

However, that research must be tempered somewhat by other factors.

Certain market segments and demographic groups may respond favorably to particular colors. If orange is the hot fashion color of the season and you are selling a guide to purchasing designer clothing for pennies on the dollar, that orange background may actually inspire some additional action.

Your background choice color can vary from the “stand by” tones and still be a rousing success. Others have found that a traditionally colored background subtly featuring the product’s “watermark” can be a background hit.

**The only way to really know for sure is by testing the colors and the response different shades generate.** You can construct two (or more) different versions of your sales page, changing only the color and track the results. You might just stumble upon a background color that

superchargers your sales. **After all, anecdotal evidence does suggest that a shift from a noxious color to an optimal color may boost sales by as much as thirty percent.**

Keep it in perspective, of course. Your headline is going to be far more important than your background color, as is the rest of your sales copy. Nonetheless, taking some time to test for an optimal color or simply relying on a dark blue background is probably a far better idea than “following your instincts” and choosing a more colorful palette that could turn some visitors off.

**Every part of your sales page can make a difference.** That is why it is always worthwhile to look for some potential edge anywhere on the site.

One frequently overlooked means of making sure you get your fair share of sales is background color. **If you are struggling for sales, it might be time to toss that neon green and to look for a different option!**

## Looks aren't Everything

Many of us tend to be visual thinkers and we reflect that tendency in the way we approach the design of our sales page. We write some copy and design a perfect page around it.

The background color is perfect. The graphics are amazing. We choose a great font and use a carefully matched color scheme. Everything is lined up according to plan and looks just as good in an antique version of Explorer as it does in the latest Firefox release. Impressed with our design skills, we launch the sales page only to be disappointed with the results.

### **How could a page that perfect convert so poorly?**

You might be tempted to think the low conversion rate is a by-product of the product, but a quick look at the success others are experiencing in the same genre will controvert that possibility. You might even wonder if your idea of what looks good is wildly different from the perspective held by others. Assuming you were working using the tenets of good design, that probably isn't the case, either.

**The issue is often far simpler and can be traced back to our approach.** We wrote that sales copy and dove right into making a gorgeous sales page. Our attentions were focused on the look of the page more than they were on the **content** of the page. Moreover, that misplaced attention is guaranteed to lower conversions.

When it comes to sales pages, looks are not everything. Not even close.

In fact, the appearance of a site (assuming it is within the realm of acceptable norms) is far less important to conversion rates than the copy the sales page contains. **Even in a graphics-rich and visual environment, words sell.**

What is the most important part of your sales page? **It's the headline.**

Words sell product. It's great to spend time and effort on a great visual presentation, but if you are framing second-rate copy with a first rate site, you are still going to get second-rate results.

The first step to building a top-converting sales page is the actual copy. Focus attention to choosing the right words and structuring them in the

right way to get results. If you aren't a talented copywriter, consider enlisting the help of a professional. Most of us are not great writers and we can experience much better sales numbers if we invest in some expert assistance with our sales copy.

After your copy is perfect, start working on design. Don't start a moment earlier. **Let your message drive your efforts, not your sense of aesthetics.** Some of the most successful sales pages in history wouldn't even make the first cut at a high school web page design contest. Many top-pulling sales pages are, to be frank, almost ugly.

Those sellers could benefit from tweaking their design, but the numbers they are generating purely based on their ad copy are so good that they dare not even consider making a change.

Looking good is great and it can help sell. However, it's wise to remember that every sale starts with and closes with words. Don't settle for sub-par copy—even the best site design won't be able to save it.

## Stop Thinking about Yourself!

Your sales page is the critical bridge between your traffic and your wallet. It is the magic piece of the puzzle that connects your product to consumers and convinces them to part with their hard-earned money. Without a sales page that works, all of your hard work is wasted.

You're proud of your product, pleased with your efforts and want to write a sales page that conveys just how deeply and passionately you feel about your offer.

### **Don't.**

One of the most commonly experienced problems for sales page authors is maintaining that personal focus. Concentrating your efforts on telling potential customers what you think and how much you believe in the product, unfortunately, takes up space without increasing conversions.

That's because all consumers share one characteristic:

### **They care far less about you than they do about themselves.**

In order to sell them your product, you need to tell them how the item will help them.

You need to explain what it will do for them.

You need to advise them on how they can use it to their advantage.

You are undoubtedly seeing a common thread developing in this analysis —**it's about them, not you.**

**Yes, your credibility is important.** You do need to find a way to qualify yourself as someone who can be trusted and who has sufficient qualification to bring your offer forward. Beyond that credibility-building (*which can be done rather subtly*), you need to remember to stop thinking about yourself. Take yourself out of the equation as much as you can.

Go through your sales copy carefully and isolate instances where you use words like **"I"** or **"me."** Every time you encounter them, look for a way to convey the same message about your product while talking about them instead. **"Me"** and **"I"** must become **"you"** in order to maximize the sales

potential of the page.

There's an old saying in the copywriting business that bears repeating again and again. The most powerful word in sales copy is "**you.**"

From your headline to your last "**p.s.**," your message must be consistently written with the reader and his or her interests at the forefront.

It's natural to bring yourself to the table.

It's your product and your success is your passion.

That belief in the offer and that personal sentiment is important—it's what will allow you to write compelling copy. However, in order for that to happen you will have to make every effort to construct every last sentence in a way that shows the reader "**what's in it for them.**"

By focusing on buyers and their needs, you can create a sales page they will read. You can hold their interest and show them exactly why they should buy the product. Remember, your opinion isn't that important—theirs is.

## It's not Always the Sales Page

You've launched your sales page and you are driving traffic right to its doorstep, but the sales just aren't coming in the way you had anticipated. Things are not performing as planned and you naturally turn your attention back to the sales page, looking for ways to improve it.

You change the header. You adjust the headline. You alter the color scheme. You add another six "p.s.'s" Nothing seems to be making a difference in terms of conversions. You read and re-read the sales copy repeatedly. You make edit after edit, hoping to stumble upon the fix for this disappointing situation.

Adjusting and tweaking your sales page is a great idea.

Making smart modifications and carefully testing them might turn what appears to be a loser into an impressive moneymaker. **However, there are times when the problem isn't the sales page.** All of the tweaking and adjusting of copy won't fix a thing when that's the case.

The trick, of course, is knowing when your copy is at fault and when something else is afoot. How can you tell when the problem is the sales page and when it lies elsewhere?

**First, look at your traffic.** Who is coming to your page and are they "the right people." You need to be sure you are sending **targeted** visitors to the page and not just those who might be vaguely interested in your product. If you are running a pay-per-click campaign, that is going to require returning to your keyword research and digging deep for answers.

If you are primarily marketing via your list, you'll need to carefully consider whether list members' opt-ins really pre-qualified them for this particular offer. **Often, tapping into different traffic stream can make all of the difference in the world.**

**Second, look at the competition.** Is there someone out there who is doing a better job selling the same product or a similar product?

Might your problem be a matter of needing to be more competitive in terms of price, bonuses or some other factor? If you are up against an army of tough competitors, you may have to find a way to make your page even stronger or some other means by which to regain an edge.

**Third, consider the product.** Revisit your market research, look at other similar products and decide whether or not you are really bringing anything new to the marketplace.

If you are, make sure you are clearly illustrating what sets your offer apart from the others. Top marketers will tell you that a good salesperson can successfully move any product, but the reality is that sales are more plentiful when you have targeted a real need among consumers.

Take a good look at some of the factors beyond your sales page. They may inform you about why things are not going as well as expected. In some cases, you may learn your project's shortcomings have nothing to do with your sales page at all. In other cases, you may be able to use an off-page investigation to find ways to adjust your offer and tactics for more success.

## Tell Them to “Do It”

Creating a powerful sales letter is an exercise in many disciplines. You need to be a web page designer and an excellent writer. You also need to be something of a psychologist. Selling is an art based on psychology and understanding some of the psychology of buying can increase your conversions significantly.

A perfect example of this is known as the “**call to action.**”

A call to action consists of finding an appropriate opportunity and using it to solicit an immediate action on the part of your reader.

We often think of sales as pure persuasion. It’s viewed as a tricky art, combining all of the elements of successful rhetoric to compel a prospective buyer to make a purchase. Good salespeople, we often believe, are masters of subtlety. They convince people to make a decision to purchase.

That is, in large measure, what selling is about. However, all of that persuasion and all of the effort required to position a buyer so that he or she is interested and willing to make a deal are meaningless if one is unable to produce that last critical action—**the purchase.**

That’s where the call to action enters the picture.

In juxtaposition to much of the art of selling, the call to action is a rather blunt instrument. It is, in essence, a demand given to the prospective buyer. “**Click here.**” “**Buy now.**” “**Place your order immediately.**”

Calls to action are worded strongly and are issued as commands.

The idea is relatively simple. Your sales efforts slowly but surely draw your prospect to the edge of the cliff overlooking the purchase. **The call to action reaches out and pushes that prospect over the edge.**

One key to a successful call of action is **perfect timing.** If you push too soon, you only encounter resistance. If you push too late, the prospect may have already mentally backed away from the cliff.

The second key to a sales-producing call to action is strong wording.

This is a particularly psychological aspect to the act of demanding a buy.

Even hardened cynics are more likely to take a desired action when directly instructed than when it is merely placed before them as an option. One would think this time-tested technique would lose some of its efficacy in the anonymous online world, free of face-to-face interaction. However, research has indicated that is not the case.

If you were to test two otherwise identical sales pages and one invited the viewer to “consider a purchase” or stated “you may now buy the product” while the other page advised the reader to “click here and buy now” or said “buy this product immediately,” the second option would wildly outperform the first.

The call to action is a perfect example of how the psychology of sales should be carefully woven into your sales page. **It requires some skill in execution, but the impact on conversions is amazing.**

## The Power of the Guarantee

When it comes to offline purchases, a guarantee often isn't that important to us. We may be concerned with warranties and guarantees for major purchases, but run of the mill acquisitions are usually made without any thought of a guarantee. If we go to a film, we don't expect a guarantee that we will enjoy the show. If we buy a steak, we don't expect a guarantee of a quality meal.

**The online world is somewhat different.** The anonymity of sellers and the rampant reporting of scams and dirty dealings, combined with the relative newness of the medium, create a confidence vacuum for many consumers. They don't know exactly what to expect and they never feel certain of whom to trust. **The use of a guarantee can help fill that vacuum and can allow customers to make purchase they may otherwise be reluctant to make.**

This holds true for ten-dollar bargain ebook buys and mentoring programs that cost thousands of dollars. The presence of a guarantee creates a calmness and certainty on the part of the buyer and it provides him or her with a safety net into which they know they can fall if things aren't to their liking.

**The primary value of a guarantee is psychological.**

In practical terms, only a small percentage of buyers (even of dissatisfied buyers) will ever actually "cash in" a guarantee. Nonetheless, its presence at the time of purchase may have assuaged some of their concerns enough to be a real difference maker.

Additionally, most consumers realize that if the seller is unscrupulous, the stated guarantee will probably be meaningless. They understand that on an intellectual level, but the existence of an earnestly expressed guarantee fills the aforementioned confidence vacuum.

Finally, most consumers are aware that their credit card companies or third party payment providers offer some level of protection in the event of seller malfeasance. Thus, they know they probably don't really need a guarantee in the first place. **Despite that fact, seeing a statement from the seller offering a return of their money if they are dissatisfied inspires confidence.**

Inclusion of a guarantee policy in a sales page is a great way of creating a

sense of assuredness and credibility. **It gives the seller a self-made appearance of integrity and communicates a certainty in the quality of the offering.**

Review many guarantee policies and develop a sense of how you can best construct and express your own. Strive for clarity and certainty in wording. **Write the guarantee so that it sends out a bright beam of confidence in the product.**

When you write a sales page, insert a strongly worded guarantee policy and to make sure it is sufficiently noticeable. It may seem unnecessary and you may even wonder if it might raise the prospect of possible dissatisfaction in the customer's mind, but research indicates that its presence can increase conversions significantly.

## Sweetening the Pot

Shoppers love a good deal. Just putting a “sale” sign on a window can increase business considerably, even when price cuts aren’t that significant. There is a deeply imbedded compulsion to take advantage of situations when one is offered something for nothing. We’ve all been told there is no such thing as a free lunch, but when we take on the role of a consumer, we search for one nonetheless and respond to opportunities that offer us something extra or “free.”

Those indisputable facts have been noted by internet marketing experts and have been translated into action in the form of “**free bonuses.**”

The idea is simple. Set up your customer for a sale and just in case they still aren’t one hundred percent sure they want to take the next step, **you sweeten the pot with one or more giveaways.**

One is not required to offer a free bonus as a prerequisite to a high conversion rate. It is quite possible to sell a product or service successfully without supplying the buyer with anything other than the item itself. **However, in many cases, the presence of some bonus items can make a significant difference.**

Bonuses are particularly well-suited for those situations in which one is selling a product also offered by other marketers.

If a shopper can buy the same item at roughly the same price from multiple locations, offering bonus items can be a way to differentiate an offer and separate it from the pack.

Bonuses also tend to work well for entry-level projects.

If you are selling a product aimed at beginners or “newbies,” they may be quite enamoured with the idea of getting a series of additional products at no extra cost. They will ascribe real value to your free bonuses and will take them into consideration when deciding whether or not to buy.

**Ideally, bonuses should be consistent with, or related to, the actual product being sold.** They should also be presented as valuable tools that can compliment the main product.

One can use any item for which they already have re-sell rights as a bonus, but many find that products introduced in the “last wave” often

make great bonuses. The market for these items as a full-priced item may have dried up, but there are many people who were unwilling to buy at retail who would still be interested in receiving the item free of charge.

Bonuses are not a necessity and may not pack much punch in some circumstances, but in other situations they can be quite valuable to a marketer.

If you are looking for a way to stand out among many sellers of the same product or is selling a product aimed at introductory level buyers, including a package of free bonuses in the sales page can produce a noticeable increase in the number and percentage of successful conversions.

## Let Others Do the Talking

Your sales page is the key to turning your product into a moneymaker. You want to carefully craft each word. You want to make sure that every aspect of the design is flawless. You'll write it, re-write it, edit it, test it and return to it repeatedly to perfect it. It's your baby.

However, in order to maximize the effectiveness of your effort, you will probably want to turn over some of the space in that sales page to others.

**Sound insane?** Why would you let anyone else tinker with your message? Believe it or not, your words and your message will be more effective when they are buttressed by third party commentary.

### You want testimonials.

Testimonials are comments from others acquainted with your product that tout its virtues. If you've looked at even a few sales pages, you'll have undoubtedly noticed that they often feature this kind of outside input.

Happy customers, noted experts and others who love your product can provide remarks **that increase the credibility and power of your pitch.**

Capturing good testimonials isn't hard. All one needs to do is to supply "advance copies" of the product to a few individuals for review. In exchange for a free sneak peak at what you are doing, others will be happy to offer remarks. If you let them know those remarks may be used as testimonial material, **they will usually write just the kind of material you need to power up your presentation.**

Although there are ethical problems with utilizing phony or paid testimonials, there is often some quid quo pro involved in the process.

Generally, contributors receive a link back to their own online endeavor in exchange for their positive remarks. This benefits them, but it also has a credibility-building impact for you, as well. **Readers are able to see that real online professionals think highly of the offer.**

The use of a photograph of the person providing a testimonial is recommended. This gives the comments a "face" and increases their impact. Weak testimonials featuring glowing comments attributed to "John in Michigan" or "Andrea in California" mean much less to potential buyers than seeing real people and knowing their link is there,

too.

Testimonials that offer concrete observations and that explain the product's real value in specific terms also tend to be more believable--and persuasive--than those that merely offer a glowing review without any supporting analysis. Try to avoid high hype “**this is the best product ever**” comments and instead look for testimonials with more “meat.”

It's your sales page, and you'll want to control it in every possible way, but one of the best possible things you can do to increase its effectiveness is to set aside some of its area for comments by others. **The use of testimonials is a strong, easy way to make your product more attractive.**

## Be an Art Student

Budding young artists don't just work from blank canvasses, producing their own creations. That is part of their routine, but serious students of the arts also spend a great deal of time copying the techniques and work of the masters. If you visit an art museum, you will invariably see at least one art student carefully sketching the contours of a classic piece. He or she is learning technique, mastering style and grasping the fundamentals that will later be translated into something completely original.

Writing a sales page may seem remarkably different from painting a masterpiece, but any budding copywriter can take a lesson from those art students. **Learning from the masters is a proven technique for developing perfect copy that converts.**

### Have you ever heard of a swipe file?

Almost every professional copywriter has one.

It is a file of other sales letters and ad copy, prepared by noted successes in the field. It can be consulted for inspiration, as a means of learning technique and as a source for model work upon which he or she can build. The practice of studying copywriting masters is common among practitioners.

If you are writing your own sales page, you should implement this strategy. Find other sales pages that work. Find famous examples of top performers and look at what successful competitors are doing to make their product move. Look at some of the most highly regarded products in your niche and carefully examine their sales efforts.

You don't want to plagiarize, of course. Nor do you want to produce a cheap replica of an already-successful site. **What you want to do is study those great ads and learn exactly how they are structured.**

Develop a sense of what kinds of words are being used and toward what ends. Note structure and composition. Find a way to "get inside the head" of talented copywriters and sales page designers and try to explore how they produce such enviable results.

If you absorb yourself in this study and research, the lessons learned will show up in your own work. Your ability to write a working sales page will be enhanced considerably, and the understanding you have gained of

effective copywriting will emerge quite naturally. Those who try to produce sales copy without this background and study are often doomed to mediocrity. Those who have studied sales pages, on the other hand, usually produce a higher quality finished product.

It's tempting to sit down with your HTML editor or word processor and to begin writing your sales piece from scratch. However, you will improve your chances at success if you first take the time to understand what is working elsewhere and why. **By being a serious student of the art of sales, you are more likely to eventually produce a sales letter that will convert readers into buyers.**

---

## The Risks and Rewards of Sales Page Creativity

You may have noticed that so many sales pages look very similar to one another. They have a teaser, a main headline, a sub-headline and then follow a predictable pattern in their construction. They feature testimonials in similar locations and follow the meat of the copy with a pattern of “p.s.” reminder messages. After you look at dozens of these almost cookie-cutter efforts, you may decide that it’s time to do something different.

Breaking the mold sounds like a good idea. By producing a truly creative presentation, you can set yourself and your project apart from the crowd. Standing out will increase the chances of readers remembering you and your offer. It can also encourage them to embrace the unique presentation, reading it more carefully, and taking action without as much reservation.

That may be the case.

However, those who feel a creative impulse when writing their sales letter need to remember that their boredom with the format is a byproduct of their experience. That experience does not duplicate that of the average buyer. You have studied scores of pages in order to perfect your own. You are also in the internet marketing business, meaning you are constantly surrounded by sales pages.

The typical buyer, on the other hand, is not in the industry. He or she probably encounters very few sales pages. **The structure that seems so tired and limp to you may be quite new and enticing to your customer base.**

Additionally, there is a reason so many sales pages share so many characteristics. **They work.** The format and organization have been proven, repeatedly, to produce effective results. The similarity among so many sales pages is not purely a byproduct of some type of groupthink. Instead, it is duplication based on results. **The traditional structure sells products.**

Does this mean you should abandon your dream of being creative?

Not at all.

What it does mean is that you will want to temper your creative instincts

with recognition of why traditional pages seem to be so successful.

You will want to make sure that your new strategy somehow takes the things that really work from the traditional organizational method. In other words, creativity is a nice idea, **but only informed creativity is really likely to work.**

Feel free to try something new. If you do, however, you will also want to have a more traditionally organized sales page ready for use in the event of disappointment.

In fact, the optimal solution may be to use both pages, testing the results to see if your new approach can actually outperform the tried and true methodology.

Sales pages can be creative in terms of their content. They can even be creative in terms of organization. However, impulsive acts of creativity inspired simply by a longing to escape the standard pattern of sales page structure are unlikely to succeed. **You will need to combine knowledge and understanding of the trade with your creative energies.**

## Accounting for Skepticism when Authoring a Sales Page

This chapter is going to change the way you look at writing sales pages forever. The information in this brief section will take you from being a mild-mannered mediocre copywriter to becoming a super hero in the field.

You are about to read a handful of secrets that will change your life forever and will transform you from a hardscrabble wanna-be into a human mint, printing cash for yourself whenever you want it.

**Be prepared to take these lessons and become instantly rich.**

Did you believe that last couple of paragraphs?

Probably not.

Among all the clichés we have heard repeatedly in our lives, the warning that “if it sounds too good to be true, it probably isn’t” must be on top of the frequency list.

That repetition and our own personal experiences have led us to recognize the truth of old saying, too. If anyone is exaggerating anything **THAT** much, it is bound to fall short of the claims made.

Yet we also know that hype, in proper moderation, can sell.

We see it all the time. Sales pages offering amazing offers that cannot possibly measure up to the blistering ad copy produce results.

**How can these two phenomena co-exist?** We all know that insane overblown claims are pure nonsense, yet we also know that a hype sells. It seems contradictory. In reality, it isn’t.

The hype energizes the reader and gets him or her excited.

It captures his or her attention and creates a sense of urgency and need surrounding the product. **It does so almost instantly.** Then, the rational mind, seasoned with years of experiences steps in and dampers enthusiasm. It begins to issue its warnings and to express its reservations.

Good sales page writers **understand this process.** They will create that sense of excitement and will then immediately take measures to satisfy

the skeptical, logical part of the mind that begins to rain on the parade.

How?

A good sales page will preoccupy the fully rational mind with logical argument and analysis in support of the product. The sizzle may sell, but the steak is necessary to keep the inner skeptic at bay.

Solid arguments and evidence in support of the product allow the rational mind to become an ally of the excited subconscious, instead of its competitor.

Additionally credibility-building measures will also be implemented. This may include endorsements or testimonials from other trusted sources. It may involve a brief backgrounder on the product's producer or the item's history. Steps like this can reduce skepticism, allowing the motivation great ad copy produces to hurtle the buyer toward making a purchase.

In essence, writing a high-conversion sales letter requires a mastery of creating buzz and excitement, but that skill must be coupled with an ability to satisfy human curiosity and rational concerns in order to be truly effective. **Your sales page has to be wildly appealing on a gut level, but it must also account for every reader's inner skeptic, too.**

## The Devil is in the Details

One of the hallmarks of a high-conversion sales page is its ability to provide sufficient information about the product while remaining interesting.

You don't want to offer an owner's manual for your product as your sales point, but by the same token, you do need to balance your promotion of the product with enough information to hurdle buyers' reservations. This can be a difficult feat, but it can be accomplished.

Consider these guidelines for writing a sales page that imparts enough information to be powerful while falling short of "giving away too much" or becoming dry and dull.

Reveal the "**need to know**" items.

Shortfalls in essential information decrease overall sales and increase the likelihood of undesirable returns.

If anyone is going to buy your product, he or she will need to know some basics. If you are offering a software product, be sure to mention somewhere what kind of systems can operate it. If you are selling an ebook, make sure its clear exactly what kind of information is being provided. Ask yourself **what you would want to be sure about before making a purchase** and then translate that into sales page material.

Focus on the big selling points.

You might be very proud of your ebook's design, but the fact that you found the perfect font for your PDF is probably not going to help sell the item.

You may love the color scheme of your program, but the fact you have found a great way to combine brown and green in the user interface won't sell too many extra copies.

Avoid focusing on the more trivial niceties of your product, and instead focus your sales pitch on the biggest, strongest selling points. If you overdo it, you risk creating a dull marketing piece and those more important factors can get lost in a crowd of trivialities.

Apply the two-part test to every sentence.

**When you have completed the draft of your sales letter, apply a two-part test to every sentence.**

Each sentence in your page must pass inspection.

Each must be interesting or completely necessary.

Optimally, they will be both, although it is occasionally necessary to provide a piece of pure information that may not, in and of itself, excite a reader. **If you find text that is neither important or interesting, excise it or re-write it until it passes inspection.**

A sales page is not the place for filler or dry information that is not essential. Go through your offering with a fine-tooth comb and remove that which is not needed.

Details and solid information are essential to a successful sales page, but too much can render it ineffective.

The key is understanding how much and what kind of information you need to provide in order to create a winner. **Following these guidelines will help you to create a page that converts.**

**To Your Lifetime Of Sales Success!**

© WWW.THEFREEDOMLIST.COM 2006 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED