

Killer Copy: Words That Are Like Magnets to Money

by David Garfinkel

I'll never forget what my accountant said several years ago when he saw the ad I wrote for my services: "How many scotches did you drink before you wrote this?"

He was kidding about the scotch. But he just couldn't believe anyone in their right mind would write such a bold and outrageous ad for their own writing, consulting, and speaking services as I had.

Well, I spent \$300 on that ad—\$200 to run it in a local trade association directory, and \$100 to have it reprinted as a flyer.

The following year, that \$300 ad turned into \$12,341 in new business for me. And \$12,341 was just a tiny fraction of my total business that year.

Why did I make so much money myself while there were so many thousands of "starving writers" in the world? The answer may surprise you. You see, it's not because I'm a better writer. It's not my schooling. Not my resume. Not any talent I was born with.

It's all because I learned how to write "killer copy."

How do you write killer copy?

You start your killer copy with an emotion-packed opening statement that will get the attention of your reader. This opening statement may be:

- A headline
- An opening sentence
- A subject line on an e-mail
- The header on a Web page

...or for that matter, the opening words in a telemarketing script, radio commercial, or TV spot. What's important is that you understand that your first words count for everything, because you must captivate peoples' imagination with those words in order to keep their attention.

Here are examples of opening statements from actual, successful marketing pieces:

a) "Take the luxury vacation of your dreams at a reduced cost because of this special offer" (from a travel agency's letter to business owners.)

b) "How to stop overwhelm before it stops you" (from a personal coach's ad aimed at stressed-out overachievers)

c) "Why almost every financial statement in family court may not disclose the full net worth of the opposing spouse" (from an investigator's sales letter to divorce lawyers.)

Then, after your emotion-packed opening statement, you just

- a) Make a promise,
- b) Back it up with convincing proof, and
- c) Ask for action.

Let's look at how you do each of those three techniques.

1. Make a promise. The letter about luxury vacations starts with these words:

"Imagine taking your winter vacation knowing you aren't spending a penny more than you have to—secure that you have a team of travel experts making sure every little detail of your vacation goes smoothly. Here's how you can have that vacation right now: Take advantage of an unusual promotion our company is doing. Let me explain..."

Pretty exciting, right? Even if you don't think so, the people who got the letter did, because the letter produced an amazing \$5 million in sales for the travel agency.

2. Back it up with convincing proof. The personal coach's ad for stressed-out overachievers, the one that begins "How to stop overwhelm before it stops you," contains this proof:

- Three case studies,
- Three testimonials,
- Detailed credentials of the coach, and
- A money-back guarantee.

Despite its stunningly bold claims, the ad comes

across as very believable and has generated a record-breaking parade of new clients.

3. Ask for action. The investigator's sales letter to divorce lawyers, beginning "Why almost every financial statement in family court may not disclose the full net worth of the opposing spouse," ends this way:

"I would like to meet with you at no charge to show you how I can be of service to you and your clients in future family law cases.

"Please call me at your convenience so we can set up a meeting to discuss further how I can assist your clients recover their fair share of assets. Call me directly at xxx - xxx-xxxx."

Killer copy always asks for action in the most powerful way possible. Notice how the above words spell out exactly what to do, and even make a big promise—that the lawyer reading the letter will recover more money in court for their clients (and, therefore, get more money themselves).

As you can see, a few words of killer copy can lead to massive amounts of money. In fact, many people say writing killer copy is the single most valuable money-making skill in the world.

And recently, writing copy was named as one of the top 10 emerging professions for the new century.

It doesn't surprise me. In the age of the Internet, the old style of advertising copy—saying something clever, and hoping people remember—just doesn't cut it anymore.

Besides, these days, with business-to-business advertising growing so fast, the traditional advertising industry is feeling a lot of pressure for ads that really produce results. Why? Because, old-style advertising that entertains, but does not sell, is not cost-effective enough for many companies in today's hyper-competitive market.

Recently I heard from my former accountant. (A few years ago, he left accounting to start a new business.)

He asked me if I wouldn't mind sharing some ideas on how he could write killer copy for his own business.

I said sure. And now he's on his way to doing the same thing that I do for himself.

Funny thing about the conversation we had the other day. Unlike the conversation we had back in 1995, he didn't kid me about drinking scotch or anything else.

Maybe he finally realized that when it comes to increasing your income, killer copy is serious business.

Article by David Garfinkel, widely recognized by many "marketing gurus" as their secret weapon. David is known as "The World's Greatest Copywriting Coach" because he can, like no other, teach you how to turn words into cash. David is also the author and narrator of "Killer Copy Tactics" (www.roibot.com/r_kc.cgi?R67220_kctarttext3), the Web's first and only totally interactive audio/visual learning system for writing killer sales copy.