

AT THE CORE OF THE ISSUE



ON THE MARK MARKETING

February 2010

"The SME Rapid Business Builder"

Spam filters block the words Free! & New



Generations of sales and advertising gurus have proclaimed the words "Free" and "New" as among the most powerful motivators. No longer! Today's sceptical prospects have heard it all before. They no longer believe. But there's one word that gets them in every time!

First, you must understand why some of what you have been taught is wrong, or at least outdated and incomplete.

The most famous and oft quoted text books on marketing - sales and advertising - were written generations ago by legends such as John Caples, David Ogilvy, Claude Hopkins and one or two others. To this day, the majority of their secrets and insights remain perfectly valid.

Their main teaching is you don't talk about a product's features but about the benefits the buyer receives by using the product. The bigger the benefits the greater the response, declared these old sages.

About Us

On The Mark Marketing is a business dedicated to help yours. We understand every detail about running a business - from sales to staff, culture to communication, performance to profits. Our holistic approach enables us to find solution for almost every business challenge.

Our team of professionals specialises in all key areas of business - marketing strategy, creative communication and business building. Working with you, On The Mark Marketing will find ways to put a sluggish business back on track and devise marketing strategies to make a robust business even more profitable.

At On The Mark, we make marketing work for your business. We create strategies that achieve results, develop communication that delivers and discover new channels to increase your sales.

Our services include:

This makes sense. But there's a problem. These giants wrote this advice long ago when, compared with today, prospects were under-marketed. So, yes, back then, flat-out big benefits and words like FREE and NEW got people excited.

But today, more often than not, these same words and super-sized claims trigger instant rejection. The problem is, words like FREE and NEW - and the big-claim style of salesmanship and advertising they reflect - have been so overused, they've become bright red flags that scream to prospects, *Bulldust ... throw me away!*

As proof, if we at One The Mark were to send you an email with the words "new" and "free," we must misspell them, or chances are, your spam filter will bounce our message.

Ask yourself. Do you get overly excited when you encounter an email, advertisement or direct mail package trumpeting free or new or some fantastic claim to make you rich, change your life overnight or give every woman a baby-smooth complexion?

Do you really believe all these "Sale" signs you see displayed in stores across the country? Of course not! There's a specialty linen shop in one of Sydney's major shopping arcades that's had "Closing Down Sale" signs continuously plastered across its windows for at least the last 10 years! Regular passers-by believed it for a while but.

We've all heard and seen variations of such claims too many times. Our exquisitely sensitive mental spam filter rejects all these messages instantly, as we think to ourselves, *"Unbelievable!"* This is the near-universal response of a too-busy world awash in marketing hype.

- Rapid Business Builder - A comprehensive package designed to generate growth
- Advertising & Design - A complete range of marketing communication services including advertising, brochures, web design
- Internet Marketing - To make sure you have your fair share of the online world, we put the latest technology to work for you

Words like 'NEW' and 'FREE' – plus an ever-growing list of other meaningless adjectives and exaggerations - are mass murderers of honest sales and marketing communication. They kill belief and fall into the same category as the politician's hoary old pledge, "Elect me and I will make the world safe, cut your taxes and give everyone universal health care".

Yet the majority of SMEs and amateur copywriters never learn from their own inbuilt radar.

They spend their time copying others and dreaming up more of the same unbelievable claims. So, what the answer? What's the one magic word we spoke about right at the beginning of this White Paper?

BECAUSE that's it! That's THE WORD.

When you use, or imply, the word 'because' you begin to justify your claim. You make it believable providing what you say is true and specific. For instance, "**Everything 50% off.** (because) **Our lease expires November 15th.**" Or, from a different angle, "**We always keep our promises**" (because) You prove this by listing testimonials (real names) from satisfied customers.

But whatever you do, never make your claim bigger than your proof. In other words, don't exaggerate! And always join your claim and your proof at the hip so that you never trumpet one without the other.

There is no more powerful or consistent way to explode your sales than by surrounding your claims with stronger, bolder proof. And we are not talking just about testimonials but every method you can find to bolster your proof and credibility. One of the easiest ways is simply to avoid like the plague words and phrases so overused, they instantly trigger the "**I don't believe you**" response. Another is to sandwich your big promise inside an *IF THEN* construction in your sales pitch or ad headline.

When you say *IF* (followed by a requirement your prospects have to meet), it seems to magically switch off their inbuilt alarm and usher you right through their front door to sell. Surprisingly, it even works when you make the requirement easy to meet. For instance

If you can open an account with a major bank, I guarantee to improve your financial future

or

If you've got 20 minutes a month, I guarantee a thinner, healthier you.

The promise still seems so big and hard to believe. But that is the power of the *IF.THEN* construction. For some reason, it seems to put the universal warning system to sleep, like punching in the alarm code when you enter your home.

Of course, be sure to fully explain how and why the benefit can be achieved with such an easy requirement. But if the requirement is not extremely easy - only moderately so - that is even better, because it is more believable. Surprisingly, truth is gloriously effective in successful selling or boosting advertising response.

Test this *IF.THEN* concept yourself then measure the results. You may be startled by how much it outpulls the typical big-promise most sales messages rely on.

One of the most effective uses of the *IF.THEN* technique took the form of an ad for a speedwriting course on London's Underground. It was aimed at secretaries. But as virtually every commuter stood, hanging on the straps and swaying with the motion of the train, they'd read this poster just above eye level. The headline was a sentence handwritten in script across a spiral bound notebook. It read:

**F u cn rd ths msg,
u 2 cn dbl yr incm
w spdwrtnng.**

Everyone who saw it set about deciphering the message. Including legions of secretaries who succeeded and responded to the ad.

F u cn uz ths aprch THN u cn dbl yr incm. Try it.

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