

Marketing Made Easy

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Hello!

Welcome to Marketing Made Easy - a compilation of some of the most popular Ezine articles I have written and published over the last 2 years. I appreciate your interest and sincerely hope you find this book to be of value.

This ebook is designed to address the primary setback most entrepreneurs have... failure to know and understand their target audience in every aspect of marketing. Through each of the articles contained within this ebook, you will find information that will greatly expand the ways you think of your target audience and how you apply that knowledge.

My company, KT & Associates, offers targeted copywriting, copy editing, ezine article promotion and marketing assistance for small businesses. I encourage you to visit the article archive of the Web site where I post all new articles as they are written. You can find KT & Associates at www.ktmarketing.com.

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Chapter I: Getting Inside the Mind Of Your Customer

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The Most Important Thing To Know About Advertising

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I am often asked, "What is the most important thing to know about advertising?" The answer is simple, although it eludes many people.

Know your target audience!

When you ask most business owners who their target audience is, you are generally quoted a list of demographics. While demographics are a portion of the make up, to know your target audience goes far beyond statistics.

Advertising is a message you send to the people whose business you would like to gain. It is a form of communication to a specific group of buyers. When you communicate with friends and family, you take the communication style of that particular person into account before you speak or write. The same holds true for your target audience.

When you begin to write a letter, you don't sit down and begin writing without first determining who the letter will be addressed to. If you are writing your mother, you will no doubt design the message differently than if you are writing your best friend. Your verbiage changes and your style changes according to who you are writing. You make a point, although sometimes subconsciously, to write in such a way that your audience will be receptive. These same principles apply when addressing your target audience via advertising messages.

Find out all you can about what kind of people your target group consists of... not just what demographic segment they fall into. Find out if they are analytical or creative types, if they are business professionals or stay-at-home moms. The closer you get to those in your target audience, the more effectively you'll be able to communicate with them...and the better received your advertising will be!

So What?!

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When writing advertising copy, asking this question is essential. Why? Because your customer is going to ask it over and over again.

Customers do that. I'll bet you do it, too! Customers want to know what's in it for them. That's why it is vitally important to constantly work the answers to "So what" and "Why" into your copy. This is done by listing features, but more importantly by listing benefits.

Let me give you an example. Let's say you see an ad for a cat litter. The ad indicates this cat litter offers specially enhanced particles. Everyone's next question will be "So What?" The specially enhanced particles are a feature of the cat litter. The feature doesn't relate why the customer needs this product. The feature may be quite impressive, however the person watching wants to know why they should be interested in those particles. To answer the question at hand we need to list the benefit.

It just so happens that these specially enhanced particles were developed to absorb every single bit of odor left in the litter box. These particles will leave the litter box just as fresh smelling as before kitty did his business. That is what the customer needs to know. That information is what the customer will relate to. Now, are you asking, "So What"? Ok, I'll tell you.

When writing copy, be sure to include features and benefits. Let's look at our cat litter ad again. If we make just one small adjustment to the copy it becomes much more powerful.

Kitty Fresh cat litter was developed with specially enhanced particles that adsorb all odors from the litter box. Your house stays fresh smelling all day. And because these particles work so well, you won't need to change the litter box as often. Try Kitty Fresh cat litter today!

How's that? That answers "so what" and "why". The customer understands what the particles are and why they need them.

Here are some other questions to remember when writing ad copy:

- 1) Why does that feature benefit me?
- 2) Why would I use that product?
- 3) Why should I buy your service/product over any other?
- 4) What's in it for me?

When writing, focus on what is going through the customer's mind. Try having a friend or associate give you feedback on your copy. Tell them to answer the question "So what". If they can, you've done your job!

Customer Preferences in Online Advertising-Part 1 of 3 Information Rules Over Entertainment

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Online consumers have given some very explicit information regarding their preferences when it comes to advertising. According to research conducted by Jupiter (www.jup.com), a worldwide authority on Internet commerce, there are several things online business people need to be aware of in order to increase their advertising effectiveness.

I have created this 3-part series of articles as a commentary relating to the results of Jupiter's study entitled, "Inside the Mind of the Online Consumer". It will help you understand what the information means to you. Taking heed to the recommendations Jupiter reveals will most certainly improve your advertising response rate.

Customers Use the Internet for Information

Forty-eight (48) percent of consumers online use the Internet primarily as a utility device, not an entertainment device. This means they are using the Internet as a tool, not a toy. Because of that fact, consumers are primarily looking for information, not games. This is not a new revelation. However, how this fact relates to advertising is new.

Customers Want Information-Based Ads

According to the customers in Jupiter's survey, they respond to advertising that compliments their online activities. Forty (40) percent said they respond more readily to online ads that are informative rather than entertaining. This would include new product developments, benefits-oriented ads and those focusing on service issues.

Notice that one of the categories listed is "product benefits". This is where the majority of online advertisers fall to pieces. It is simply imperative that online advertising copy be filled with benefits. Online consumers are looking to answer the question, "What's in it for me" over and over again. They are seeking information and the advertising you give them should fill that need.

How to Build An Information-Oriented Ad

So now that we've learned that customers are ready and waiting for us to provide them with information-based advertising... how do we do it? Does that automatically mean you have to go with long copy? No, not at all.

According to Jupiter, "Advertisers that are marketing high-consideration products, which require a more informed purchase process, should focus more exclusively on consumers' online information needs. Advertisers that are marketing low-consideration products – for which consumers require little information in order to complete a purchase – have more leeway to take a less informative and more entertaining approach to their advertising."

It's just as I've stated for years. Let your target market lead your decision to use long or short copy. Those seeking information on affiliate programs, MLM programs, high-investment products or services, etc. are going to be seeking more information than someone in search of a new bathrobe. For more detail in this area, visit http://www.ktmarketing.com/articles_longcopy.html.

Here are some suggestions you can use to help build a successful information-type ad:

- 1. Include statistics** – When you make a sales claim, back it up with information, including statistics. You might say, "Our saucepans have a non-stick coating that's guaranteed for life. In actual, in-home testing, food did not stick to our saucepans 98.3% of the time."
- 2. Include targeted benefits** – You must include targeted benefits to make your message hit its mark. Let's take the saucepan example a bit further. "Our saucepans have a non-stick coating that's guaranteed for life. In actual, in-home testing, food did not stick to our saucepans 98.3% of the time. You get omelets that come out of the pan whole. You get sautéed chicken that makes a beautiful presentation on the plate. You get less waste, less burnt food and more healthy cooking because you use no oil." Now those are benefits any chef would think are important.
- 3. Provide content on your site that backs up your claims** – As you surf the Web take note of information that supports your advertising claims. Surveys, research, reports, testimonials, etc. can all provide valuable information that could move a customer from the point-of-decision to the point-of-purchase.
- 4. Submit articles** – Customers looking for information are much more likely to respond to a URL listed in an article than a bold-faced advertisement. Because articles provide information in a non-threatening way, they work along the same level as endorsements and referrals. Write articles relating to your area of expertise and submit them to article archive sites and Ezine publishers.
- 5. Offer a free report** – Give away information free with a purchase or subscription to your newsletter. Since information is what surfers are looking to receive, it will work as a big incentive.

Next in the series will be a focus on ads that are avoided and shunned by online customers... and how to be sure yours isn't one of them!

Customer Preferences in Online Advertising-Part 2 of 3 The Annoyance Factor of Online Advertising

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In part one of this series, we discussed the fact that studies show information leads over entertainment. We discovered that Web site visitors are primarily looking for information, and therefore, ads should be more information-oriented.

The second of the three discoveries in the Jupiter Communications (www.jup.com) survey that I will comment on is the discovery that some online advertising is seen as an extreme annoyance. Let's be sure your ads aren't included in that group.

What They Hate

No one likes to be bombarded with advertising. We all see it everywhere we go. It's on television, the radio, billboards, and even grocery store carts for goodness sake. However, online advertising is viewed as the most aggressive.

Jupiter found that 49% of those surveyed said online advertising was the most intrusive of all. Many were willing to tolerate ads in broadcast or print media, probably due to the fact that they could leave the room, change the station or turn the page. However, online ads hold an extremely negative reputation.

From my experience, this is most likely due to the fact that online ads often have a "used car dealer" air to them. I have seen many that look like they're all produced from the same template.

These ads promise the sun, the moon and the stars. They scream about why you simply must buy the product or service. Then, to make it worse, the site captures your email address and you receive hundreds of email advertisements via an autoresponder that apparently has no end.

The Worst Possible Ads

The worst offender is pop-up ads. These are the advertisements that pop onto the screen as you click through a Web site. They advertise specials or offer subscriptions to Ezines, etc. Once thought to be a tremendous sales tool, these ads have become increasingly offensive.

Sixty-nine percent (69%) of those in the Jupiter survey viewed pop-up ads negatively. Almost 25% found them so annoying they would completely avoid sites that used them. That's a powerful statistic. Can you afford to have 25% of your Web site traffic never return simply because you employ pop-up ads?

What We Can Do To Make It Better

So, now that we know what our site visitors hate, how can we adjust our advertising in order to please them (and make them buy)?

Here are some recommendations to consider when creating your next piece of advertising:

1. Don't do "anything and everything" to get the buyer's attention. Everyone that comes to your site isn't going to buy. The harder you try to get their attention and force them to read your ad, the harder they will try to escape.

2. Remember from Part 1 in this series, site visitors are looking for information primarily. Include your ad along with other, useful information. Perhaps you might try offering a free report or article that provides information the visitor can use. At the bottom, insert an advertisement for a product or service you offer that can help them further.
3. Don't use pop-up ads.
4. Keep your target audience in mind. Business people aren't going to have the time or inclination to participate in game-type ads. On the other hand, teenagers love them. If your target group is younger people, games might be the thing for you. Design your ad to meet the preferences of your target customer.

Using these suggestions will help your ads be more readily received – instead of avoided at all costs!

In Part 3, the final article in this series, we'll look at the behavioral aspect of online advertising and discover what characteristics and traits should be kept in mind.

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