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THE SPECIFICS OF A SALES LETTER

Abstract

In modern society advertising promotes goods and services, gives an impetus to all industries and acts as an integral part of culture which explains the relevance of the study. Sales letters are widespread as a way to popularize goods and services. The research is new because it defines different kinds of sales letters depending on the contained information: familiarizing with goods or services, making an appointment with a potential client, replying to enquiries, providing general information; and the objectives to be achieved: selling products or services, notifying customers, getting a response. The paper clarifies the definition of a sales letter, defines its structure, which includes: an image, a headline, a greeting, a lead paragraph, a body and a closing. The functions of the components of sales letter are identified: attracting attention, announcing a product or service, highlighting the benefits and providing additional information, a call to action. The rules for writing sales letters are formulated. Copywriters can use the materials in their work which explains the practical significance of this research.

Keywords: sales letter, kinds of sales letters, definition of a sales letter, structure, functions

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1. All about a Sales Letter

A sales letter is a document intended to generate sales. It influences the reader to place an order, to request for information about a product or service. The basic aim is motivate the reader to take a specific action [1, 7–8].

Sales letters can portray numerous kinds of information. For example:

- a) It makes you aware of the product and services that you are offering.
- b) Make an excuse for futures appointment.
- c) Replying to enquiries [1, 4].
- d) General Information. A sales letter can notify the consumer of the latest offers, products, services, sales, and so on. It can be any other information that you feel will interest the reader.

To help in establishing how you should write your sales letter, it is important to map out your objectives. Once you are clear about your objective, it will be easy for you to adopt the required technique. Here can be a few of them:

a) For selling any Product or Service. If your sole aim is to sell your products or service, you need to convince people. You need to use words that will convince the prospect of your product or service. Remember, do not be pushy. Talk in a conversational tone.

b) To Notify the Customer. If your sole objective is to provide the consumer with all essential information about your business or product or service, such sales letters are, as a result, usually escorted with leaflets and other inserts to give such information.

c) To Get a Response. The prospects may contact you for many reasons other than wanting to buy the product or service. It can be for further information, a free sample/trial, a personal visit, etc. Habitually, consumers do not like buying without physically seeing or trying out the product/service. So you must keep an option to demonstrate open. This also helps build credibility. The prospect will feel that you are genuinely interested in them and not just there to sell your products [1, 4–5].

Before starting to write a sales letter, you must also try to put yourself in the prospective customer's shoes. Realize how you treat unwanted letters that you receive. Most of these letters, if not all, go in the bin. In fact, you don't even bother to open some of them [1, 7–8].

2. What Are the Basic Parts of a Sales Letter?

Any sales letter roughly follows the following sequence: a) image, b) headline, c) greeting, d) lead paragraph, e) body, f) closing [1, 14].

The Image: If there is a logo or design for your business, use it in the sales letter only if it is really pertinent to what you are offering. You are not selling your business logo; you are selling benefits that the buyer will realize if he buys your product or service. Use a specific image that is inherent to your headline, content, and theme, or do not use one at all. Stick to words as far as possible [1, 14].

Job of the Headline: The headline is usually 3 – 30 words long. It should be catchy. It should grab the reader's attention and tell him what the sales letter is about. Ideally, the job of the headline is to get the reader's concentration, target the viewers, list an advantage, and make an assurance [1, 14].

Greeting and Lead Paragraph: Spin a yarn that the reader can identify with, using a conversational tone. Announce a new product or service, an exclusive event, or important news, flaunting your unique selling proposition. Speak to the reader as your equal: "Dear fellow car purchaser, are you aware of ..." You could start with something innovative, perhaps a quote or anecdote. You could start by identifying the reader's problem, one that your product promises to solve. Ask a question that might excite the reader [1, 14–15].

Body of the Letter: The body copy should use the same tone and endure with the theme of the headline. You should persist highlighting the benefits and offer proof of the claim you made. Provide details of the benefits and the features. Build credibility. Your basic objective is to create a need or want for your products or services and make people do what you want them to [1, 15].

Closing or Call to Action: If you solicit the reader to order, support, or to contact you for the particular cause, you must make it easy for him to reply. You must support the sales letter with a prepaid envelope and an order form. If not suitable, supply a toll-free telephone number, an email link, and/or your URL. Always thank the reader for his patience. Always use a postscript [1, 15].

A Final Suggestion: Getting the reader to spend his hard-earned money on you is the real challenge. The best way to ensure this is to use test readers. Test readers would be able to give their opinion if anything is missing in the letter [1, 15].

3. A 12-Step Guideline for a Good Sales Letter

C. Erwanda outlines 10 key principles of writing effective promotional copy for print: accurate, appealing, benefit-led, concise, direct, purposeful, persuasive, structured, targeted, true to image [2, 8]. These principles determine the following rules.

Try to Get Attention: Presuming the reader has opened your envelope; the next important step is to get his attention. The headline is the foremost thing that your reader will notice. People have a very limited attention span and usually shove their mail into the wastebasket unless the headline jumps out to them.

Identify the Reader's Problem: Now that the reader has given you her full attention, you have to go straight to the problem area. Try to empathize with the reader. Another method is to agitate the problem. You present the problem, then excite it so that she really feels the pain and anguish of her situation.

Provide the Solution to the Problem: Now that you have identified the reader's problem, you become the "saviour" by providing them with the solution to the problem. You introduce your product or service and show them how all their problems will vanish once they get your product or service [1, p. 26–27].

Present your Credentials to the Prospect: Just telling the reader that you can make their life more comfortable and convenient will not prod them to jump in and grab your stuff. You need to build trust and prove your credibility. You can do this in the following manner: a) listing successful case studies and instances; b) naming prestigious companies (or people) you have done business with; c) mentioning your work experience; d) showing important awards and accolades that you have won.

Show the Benefits of your Products: Now you need to tell the reader how they will personally benefit from your product or service. Don't just mention the features. Nobody is interested in just the features. What you can do instead is to draw two columns. In one column, you can write the features and in the other, mention any conceivable benefit that they can receive from the feature. You can also use bullet points for each benefit to make it user-friendly to navigate [1, 26–27].

Give Your Social Proof: After you've presented all your benefits, now you need to build your credibility and trust with your reader with testimonials from contented customers. Testimonials are influential selling tools that establish your claims to be true. Another way of making your testimonial even more influential, include pictures of your customers with their names, addresses, and phone numbers.

Make Your Final Offer: Your offer is the most essential element of your sales letter. If your offer is great, even a mediocre sales copy will make it irresistible. Your offer can come in many different layouts. The best offers are usually an attractive blend of price, terms, and free gifts. It is always more lucrative to add more and more benefits to your offer rather than just lowering the price [1, 27–28].

Give a Promise or Guarantee: You can make your offer even more appealing by taking out the risk factor from it. Remember that people have a built-in fear that marketers are out there to cheat them. Give a very strong guarantee, but only if you have enough confidence in your product

or service. If your product or service is good enough, very few people will actually need any refund [1, 29].

Inject the Elements of Scarcity: Most people take their own sweet time responding to offers, even when they are appealing. To stimulate people to take action, you need to add incentives to the offer. You can create a sense of scarcity by informing your reader that either the supply or the quantity is limited. You can also mention that your offer is valid for only a limited time period [1, 29].

Call to action: Do not presume that your reader is familiar with what to do to obtain the benefits from your offer. You must guide them carefully on how to make the order in very comprehensible and concise language. Tell them whether you want them to call you, fax you, or click the order button on your website [1, 30].

Give a Warning: A good sales letter should persist to build emotion, even after your call to action. You can use the “risk of loss” strategy to let the reader know what would happen if they did not take advantage of your existing offer. Try to paint a sad picture in the psyche of the reader about the penalty of not taking action now. Drill into them how much they are missing out at present [1, 30].

Close with a Proper Reminder: You should always include a postscript (P.S.). In your postscript, you might want to remind them of your enticing offer. If you’ve used scarcity in your sales letter, include your call to action, then remind them of the restricted time (or quantity) offer [1, 30].

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ОСОБЕННОСТИ РЕКЛАМНЫХ ПИСЕМ

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Актуальность исследования объясняется тем, что в современном обществе реклама способствует продвижению товаров и услуг, являясь двигателем развития практически всех отраслей производства, выступая неотъемлемой частью культуры. Рекламные письма распространены как один из способов популяризации товаров и услуг. Новизна исследования состоит в том, что в статье определены виды рекламных писем в зависимости от содержащейся в них информации: ознакомление с товарами или услугами, организация встречи с потенциальным клиентом, ответ на вопрос, предоставление общей информации, и поставленной цели: продажа товаров или услуг, уведомление клиентов, получение ответов, установление обратной связи. В работе также уточняется определение рекламного письма, определяется его структура, включающая: фирменный знак, заголовок, приветствие, вводная часть, основная часть, концовка. Кроме того, выявлены функции компонентов рекламного письма: привлечение внимания, анонсирование товара или услуги, доказательство преимуществ и предоставление дополнительной информации, призыв к действию, сформулированы правила составления рекламных писем. Практическая значимость проявляется в возможности использования материалов в работе копирайтера.

Ключевые слова: рекламное письмо, виды рекламных писем, определение рекламного письма, структура, функции

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