



So Much Dross...

This is part two of a two-part article on how to create effective direct response ads...

The first part was in last month's Copycat...

85% of all advertising is invisible, because it is so badly done.

14% of all advertising is extremely poor – either unattractive, stupid, patronising, demeaning. (*Ironically, that's better than being invisible, because at least it might get your attention.*)

The remaining 1% is terrific advertising.

And we are supposed to know what we are doing!

It scares the bloody life out of me to be honest. The amount of money that is wasted every day is just frightening...

The above figures are not percentages to be proud of, are they? Just imagine the same odds in other professions:

- 99% of the expertise of airline pilots was badly done or poor – more planes would crash than arrive at their destinations safely.
- 99% of all plumbers work was badly done or poor – we would return to find our properties under water.

- 99% of all shoes were badly done or poor – there would be a lot of crippled people in the world.

Here's my humble attempt at trying to make things better. Let's go to first base and try to understand how the process works...

There are 4 main reasons why people will notice and respond to your advertising & marketing messages...

1. The product has some particular relevance and attraction to them

2. The product is inherently different

3. The promotional message is unusual

4. It is a message they keep on seeing

Incidentally, these are not mutually exclusive, but promotions tend to work best when all four of these factors are at work simultaneously - the advertisement has relevance for you personally, it's unusual and different and you seem to keep on seeing it.

Let's look at one of these elements in a little more detail:

Relevance & Attraction

Just imagine you are walking down a busy high street, with hundreds of people around. Every single one of them is unnoticed by you.

You haven't made a conscious decision to ignore them. It's just the way it is.

You won't remember the great majority of them 30 seconds - let alone 30 minutes or 30 days later.

A few of the people you pass, only a small minority, will have an effect on you.

You notice them and perhaps you might remember them for a little while, or even longer. In very rare cases, that memory might last weeks - even months.

Why is it you notice some and not others? Well, there could be a number of reasons:

- People who are unusual because of their looks
- People who are funny
- People who are aggressive
- People who are dressed very individually

- People who draw attention to themselves because of what they are doing

It could be, of course, that you only notice them because something about them has a particular relevance for you, personally, perhaps reminding you of someone you know or resembling someone famous.

Having said all that, there is a prime occasion when you will pick out a face in the crowd...

...when it is a particular face you are looking for.

How many times have you been looking for someone in a crowd and you can't spot that person no matter how hard you look? You seem to see everyone else but them...

What is happening in reality is your eyes are quickly scanning all the faces in the crowd until your brain makes the connection it is looking for.

The exact same thing happens with people's reactions to advertisements and promotional material.

As I said last month, every day we are exposed to thousands of advertisements but almost all of them pass unnoticed. Why?

Simple. Kid's stuff.

An advertisement will not stimulate sales if it is not read.

An advertisement will not be read if the relevance or attraction to the reader is not clearly stated in the headline.

An advertisement will not be read if the first line of copy does not attract the reader to read the second line of copy and the third and fourth and so on.

In addition, an advertisement will not be read if it is not seen. And, it will not be seen unless it 'demands' attention

Daniel Starch knew this when he wrote, all those years ago...

"The attention-value of an advertisement is approximately twice as important as the actual convincingness of the test itself."

The great George Lois had a wonderfully simplistic view:

"Advertising isn't brain surgery. People live and think in broad strokes. Ask some guy in a mall about cars. He'll tell you Volvos are safe, Porsches are fast, and Jeeps are rugged.

Boom. Where's the rocket science here? There isn't any.

You want people who feel X about your product to feel Y. That's about it. We're talking one adjective here. Most of the time, we're talking about going into the customer's brain and tacking one adjective onto a client's brand.

That's all. De Walt tools are tough. Apple Computers are easy to use"

Steven Spielberg is probably the greatest film director that has ever lived. He said many years ago that he preferred movie ideas that could be summed up in a sentence.

"Lost alien befriends lonely boy to get home."

Really it's all about keeping it simple. If you feel you have three important things to say to your audience, don't say it in one ad. You will confuse your audience and a confused audience will not buy.

You need three ads. You might not like to hear that, but it's true.

If you don't believe me, test it. Then you will...

Okay, now to some of the stuff I promised you in Part One last month:

The 10 Elements That Are Essential For A Successful Ad

Remember. All the elements of an ad are primarily designed to do one thing. To get the reader to read the first line of the copy.

Here are the 10...

1. *Headline*
2. *Headline Sub Head*
3. *Picture (or Illustration)*
4. *Caption under picture*
5. *Copy*
6. *Copy Sub Heads (larger ads only)*
7. *Offer /Price*
8. *Response Coupon/details/website*
9. *Logo*
10. *Overall layout (must create an attractive buying environment)*

30 Headlines You Can Use Yourself

I currently have 445 proven headlines for ads that I have written, collected, begged, borrowed or stolen over the years. I add around 25-30 new ones a year.

Here are a few you can use right now...(obviously they will have to be tailored to your product or service...)

- A Surprising New Discovery...
- Discover How To...
- Could This Be...?
- At Last...It's Here...
- Take Advantage Of...
- Make The Most Of...
- Reserve Your...
- Act Fast And You'll Also Get...
- Nothing Else Compares To...
- Our Lowest Price Ever...
- If You're Worried About...
- An Exclusive Invitation
- There's Nothing Quite Like...
- Starts Working Instantly...
- A Breakthrough Formula...
- At last!
- Announcing...
- A Very Special Offer For Lovers Of...
- It's Never Been Easier To...
- You Simply Won't Believe How Good It Is...
- FREE
- Exclusive
- How To Improve Your...
- How To...
- Here's A Quick Way To...
- Yours Free - A New...
- The Secrets Of XXX Revealed FREE!
- Anyone Can Learn How To XXX With XXX
- Read This BEFORE You XXX
- There Are 9 Reasons Why You Should XXX...And Here They Are...

And finally, some gems to share...

4 Of The Most Successful Ads Ever Created

"Cash If You Die, Cash If You Don't"

FREE! Personalized Leather Wallet with built-in calculator

Cash if you die. Cash if you don't.

Should you choose to put your money into life insurance? Or should you put it into a plan that gives you a cash return? Today with Lloyd's Life Linkplan, you don't need to split your money because Linkplan gives you both.

THE MONEY MANAGER CALCULATOR
PERSONALIZED LEATHER WALLET

FREE

THE MONEY MANAGER CALCULATOR
 This calculator is designed to help you compare the cost of a life insurance policy with the cost of a Linkplan policy. It takes into account your age, sex, and the amount of money you want to invest. The calculator shows you the monthly premium for a life insurance policy and the monthly premium for a Linkplan policy. It also shows you the cash value of the Linkplan policy at the end of 10 years and at the end of 20 years. The calculator is easy to use and will help you make a decision about whether to buy life insurance or a Linkplan policy.

PERSONALIZED LEATHER WALLET
 This wallet is made of high-quality leather and has a built-in calculator. It is a practical and stylish accessory that will help you keep track of your money. The calculator is built into the wallet and is easy to use. It will help you calculate the cost of a life insurance policy and the cost of a Linkplan policy. The wallet is also a great gift for yourself or for someone you care about.

HOW THE PLAN WORKS
 You invest your money in a Linkplan policy. The money is invested in a fund that grows over time. You can withdraw your money at any time. If you die, your beneficiaries will receive the cash value of the policy. If you live, you will receive a cash return on your investment.

GO FOR GROWTH

YOUR LIFE COVER				YOUR CASH VALUE			
Amount	Age	Sex	Rate	Amount	Age	Sex	Rate
£50	20	M	£1.50	£10	20	M	£1.50
£50	20	F	£1.20	£10	20	F	£1.20
£15	20	M	£0.45	£15	20	M	£0.45
£15	20	F	£0.36	£15	20	F	£0.36
£20	20	M	£0.60	£20	20	M	£0.60
£20	20	F	£0.48	£20	20	F	£0.48
£25	20	M	£0.75	£25	20	M	£0.75
£25	20	F	£0.60	£25	20	F	£0.60
£30	20	M	£0.90	£30	20	M	£0.90
£30	20	F	£0.72	£30	20	F	£0.72

PERSONAL ILLUSTRATION REQUEST
 NO OBLIGATION - NO SIGNATURE - SEND NO MONEY

YES

Send within 10 days to qualify for up to one month's free Linkplan cover... and your FREE Personalized Money Manager!

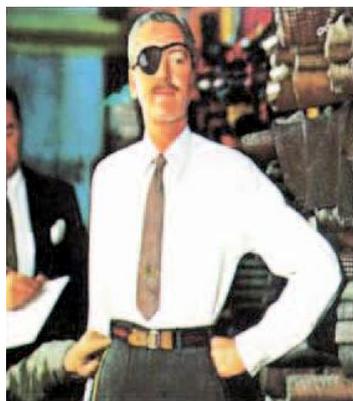
NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____
POSTCODE _____

SEND TODAY! REQUEST A FORM TO RECEIVE YOUR PERSONAL ILLUSTRATION. FREEPOST THROUGH TO US.

Lloyd's Life LINK PLAN

People don't buy insurance, they buy fear. The writer recognised this and included the word "die" in the headline. It had never been done before. This was groundbreaking and hugely successful. Previous to the appearance of this ad, life insurance was only sold by brokers. It was, I understand, tested against a more traditional ad and won hands down. You see many variations of this ad appearing from time to time.

"The Man In The Hathaway Shirt"



The man in the Hathaway shirt

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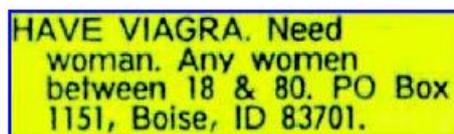
One of David Ogilvy's most famous ads. It catapulted a small brand into the big league. Notice the eye patch, which stops you in your tracks. The layout is classic.

"At 60 Miles An Hour The Loudest Noise In This New Rolls Royce Comes From The Electric Clock"



Arguably David's finest work. The great man got the line from a mechanic in the factory after spending days and days trying to understand the benefits of the product before writing about it. Something we should all learn from. Sold motor cars in huge numbers...

"Have Viagra"



This is how to do it. Straight to the point. No baggage. Unfortunately the author is dead now, due to the pulling power of the ad. It delivered more pleasure, word for word, than any ad ever written.

Keep the faith...

See you next month.

If anyone would like complete copies of any letters reviewed here, please contact Andy direct at andyowen@aol.com or copydeskUK@aol.com

About the Author

Andy Owen is Managing Director of Andy Owen & Associates, a leading International Strategic Marketing Consultancy specialising in all aspects of contemporary direct marketing. The company has offices in UK, Middle East & North Africa, with Associate Offices in Europe & The USA.

The company's corporate website is www.andyowen.co.uk The specialist copy division has its own site at www.copywritingthatsells.com

As well as his International speaking engagements, Andy runs in-house copywriting and direct marketing sessions and workshops for companies and organisations all over the world. If you feel your company could benefit from one of these, please contact Andy for details.

If you would like further information on any aspect of copywriting for direct marketing, please contact Andy direct at andyowen@aol.com or copydeskUK@aol.com

Don't forget to check out Andy's superb new DVD on Copywriting called "*How To Write Copy That Really Sells.*" To find out more and see excerpts from the DVD, visit <http://www.andyowen.co.uk/buy-online.html>