

HUBBARD COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
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COPYWRITING

References:

Marketing Series PLs

PR Series PLs

HCO PL 10 Feb 65 AD AND BOOK POLICIES

There are many trends promotion and ad copy can take. One of them is dignified, hard-hitting and dramatic. Another is warm, human and truthful. Another, the kind we don't need, is pointless or banal. It specializes in words like "exciting" and "don't miss" which are cliches (worn-out, overworked, hackneyed phrases) and would attract no attention and get you no customers.

The approach to promo and copywriting, whatever the mood or trend it takes, should be fresh and truthful. Insincere, overdone or stereotyped advertising will never sell or bring anybody into anything.

It is possible to do promotion and write copy that is alive and interesting, that attracts and is in good taste.

PRIMARY MISSION

The primary mission of any piece of promo is to create want and sell the item. When one goes to the trouble and expense of putting an ad together it has to accomplish its purpose. If you're getting up an ad for a book, the purpose is to create a want for the book and sell the book. If you're getting up an ad on a service, the purpose is to create want for the service and sell the service.

The question one asks himself is: "What ad would accomplish this purpose?" and "How am I going to convince this audience that they ought to.....?"

You dig into your surveys and you find what people want and expect of the item. You yourself must have reality on the product and the worth of the product, and you must also have a reality on your audience if you're going to reach that audience and communicate to them in your copy.

This comes under the heading of "homework".

HOMEWORK

By "homework" is meant all the necessary preliminary or preparatory work done, all the relevant facts dug up, all the data needed that will enable one to get a product out.

In copywriting it would mean getting fully familiar with the product or service one was promoting, knowing all about it. How is it produced? What does it do? Why is it valuable? What results can one expect from it?

Wherever possible the copywriter would have personal experience with the product or service himself to be able to promote and sell it honestly. He would make it his business to find out about the experience of others with it, delve into results produced, success stories, wins, achievements. He'd know the product or service and he'd be able to turn out copy that shone with reality and conviction.

And he would make it his business to know his audience. Who is the product for? Who is this public? Has this particular public been surveyed? Were the survey questions correct? What does the survey show this public wants? What do they expect from such an item? What "buttons" has this survey turned up?

When the homework has been correctly done you know the product and you know your public and you can produce a piece of promo that will bring the two together.

You use your knowledge of the product, you use the survey buttons, you use audience viewpoint and you use positioning to attract and interest and get the message across.

COPY AND POSITIONING

There has been some think in the past that when positioning is done it is then put at the beginning of the promo piece and after that one pays no attention to it. This is a misuse of positioning. It can ruin the impact of your ad; it can disperse the reader.

Everything streams out from the positioning. If one has positioned something against an airplane then the rest of the copy would be in terms of flight. It would be inherent in the way one used his words. A new item, a can opener, would take off from the drawer and dive effectively at a can. It would also give your hand a smooth ride. This is known as frame of reference. The vocabulary one uses is all inside a frame of reference. Positioning gives you a frame of reference. So you write your copy out of that frame of reference and you plan your promo piece around that frame of reference, and you keep it consistent.

Impact depends mainly upon consistency and staying on the same subject without departure from the frame of reference.

A good copywriter will make the most of positioning to enhance his copy and make it all-of-a-piece with the whole of the ad.

ASSUMING AUDIENCE VIEWPOINT

A common fault in writing ad copy or other material, both in Marketing and other areas, is an inability to assume the viewpoint of the reader and get the idea of what impression the reader may have when he reads the ad. An ad must be written from the viewpoint of the public that is going to read it.

The actual trick of writing that wins is to be able to put oneself in the valence of the person who will read it. What kind of public is that? Who is this person? Get a reality on your reader, and then, just like an actor, you assume that beingness and read your copy back. An experienced actor can flip into a beingness in about 125th of a second and flip out of it again. So just slide into such a beingness and read your copy, and you will see what I'm talking about.

It is a skill in writing to be able to read one's copy newly as though one has never heard of it before, from the beingness of the reader. It is something one should acquire.

MAINTAINING VIEWPOINT

If the writer doesn't have a firm viewpoint from the beginning and hold that viewpoint throughout the copy, his ad will lack impact. Further, it will disperse his audience. If he switches viewpoints within the ad, if he writes from the viewpoint of the producer one moment and moves in from the viewpoint of the consumer in the next paragraph, his copy is going to be confusing and he'll lose the reader.

One can't have two different approaches to the same subject in one piece of literature.

Similarly, if he has no audience viewpoint or has difficulty assuming the viewpoint of a reader, his ad will fall that much short of really communicating.

WHAT THE PUBLIC ASKS OF AN AD

In an ad or flier, you don't try to enforce understanding on the reader. That violates come-on. And it's not even what the public wants. An ad does not have to teach anything, it merely has to create want. And when the want is created you must, must, must tell the reader where he can get it. You never leave a mystery as to where someone can get the product or the service.

Ad copy can defeat its own purpose (to create want and sell something) if it doesn't include the seven points of an ad as listed in HCO PL 10 February 1965, AD AND BOOK POLICIES.

That list contains the questions a public person actually asks himself or asks of an ad or a flier. What is this service? How valuable is it? What does it do? How easy would it be for me to do it? How much does it cost? How do I get it? Where?

A good copywriter carries the reader, his interest increasing, right on through the final question. Where this is missing you have a writer who doesn't have the audience viewpoint. He may even create a want but then leaves his audience dangling. Where it is handled and handled well by a good copywriter, you have an ad that sells.

HARD SELL

It is necessary in writing an ad or a flier to assume that the person is going to sign up right now. You tell him that he is going to sign up right now and he is going to take it right now. That is the inference. One does not describe something, one commands something. You will find that a lot of people are in a more or less hypnotic daze in their aberrated state, and they respond to direct commands in literature and ads. If one does not understand this, and if he doesn't know that Dianetics and Scientology are the most valuable service on the planet, he will not be able to understand hard sell or be able to write a good copy.

So realize that you're not offering cars or life insurance or jewelry or stocks or bonds or houses or any of the transitory and impermanent things which are based on things not surviving or on things that are in fact being destroyed. You're offering a service that's going to rehabilitate the thetan and that is lasting.

Hard sell means insistence that people buy. It means caring about the person and not being reasonable about stops or barriers but caring enough to get him through the stops or barriers to get the service that's going to rehabilitate him.

That is the sole reason for our use of surveys and promotion and marketing in the first place.

When that one fact becomes real it all falls into place and it should be a short step then for a copywriter to produce an ad that attracts, interests, creates want and sells Scientology products and services.

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