

"Your Personal Cheat Sheet For Writing Million Dollar Sales Letters"

Have you ever wondered how the pros – the big names of marketing (and I don't mean Joe Vitale or Jim Edwards big...I'm talking Bob Bly, **John Carlton**, Gary Bencivenga and **Jay Abraham** big) – wrote their smashing, **award-winning** sales letters?

Is it a coincidence that these pros (and almost everyone who has learned from them) are able to churn out hit after hit – literally clearing the house with every direct marketing package they produce?

And more importantly, what can you do to discover your own writing genius and put out just one **kick-ass sales letter**?

It doesn't take much, especially if you have...

A personal sales letter template based on the **exact same process** that master copywriters have consistently used to pull in **millions of dollars** for their clients from sales letter after sales letter!

This is a special edition of SEO Power Strategies, mainly because there is just so much to cover here that we're likely to go way over the usual lesson length – you're seriously advised to **print this out** and keep it with you to read at leisure through the day.

Sales Letter Writing 101.

Let's get one thing straight – successful sales letters often **look the same**. Not in tone or in substance, but in the **underlying method** of grabbing the reader's attention, drawing them in with juicy details and eventually, making an irresistible offer and closing the deal. It's quite a bit like blockbuster Hollywood movies that typically follow the same "good guy / bad guy / happy ending with hot dame" formula (with a few exceptions, of course).

The method, the formula, **the technique** – that's the crucial ingredient behind almost all successful sales letters. Once you can master these basics (and match them with the advice I gave you in the previous lesson), you'll already be heads and shoulders above 90% of online business owners today.

So, what are these "**building blocks**"?

- A **focused** approach to a **targeted audience** (pre-writing preparation)
- Grab their **attention** (using a combination of powerful headlines and sub-headings)
- Hold their **interest** (by quickly reminding your reader why they are here (to solve a problem) and giving them teasers about the solution you are offering)
- Make them **trust** you (this is the biggest hurdle for most budding copywriters – the challenge of building an interesting and emotionally-compelling story that can get through the BS filter readers have and make them trust you as an authority, as well as convince them that you have the right solution.
- Prove your **credibility** (testimonials form a large part of this section, although if you are a well-known guru in your field, talking about your background by mentioning specific achievements (facts and figures) will work as well).
- Make your **offer** (this is where you talk about the pricing, the main product, the bonuses, etc.)
- Close the **sale** (The "Call To Action" must be urgent and clear – there's nothing worse than going through all the effort of writing a great sales letter than to have your reader leave at the end because you messed up the closing).

Quite a lot, isn't it?

Before I start though, here are a few points to remember:

- When I say **interesting**, I'm not asking you to fabricate stories. If you don't have anything interesting to include in your story, do a reality check, put on your marketing hat and think about any specific experiences, news or local events related to your expertise / product that could be unusual or fascinating for your target audience (or even the general audience). There is **always something** you can use to build an interesting story.
- Do **NOT** ignore the power of **story-telling** – it is the most powerful tool copywriters and marketers have in their arsenal. This is one skill that will only come through experience, but you can speedup the process by studying the experts. And speaking of experts...
- Make it a point to **review at least one best-selling sales letter** before you sit down to write your own – for best results, read through several examples of good sales letters (and one or two bad ones) so you can get a feel of what you should be doing and shouldn't be doing. It's very easy to fall back into the habit of being lazy and sloppy in writing – by keeping an eye on quality work, you'll be motivating yourself to write better every single time.
- In the [previous lesson](#), I went on and on about building a **tight focus** in your writing. This is paramount for a good sales letter – not only do you have to bring targeted visitors to your site (for example, if you sell a resume writing software, you'd bring job hunters and people looking for resume writers towards your website), but you also have to address them personally. Talk to your audience; the sales letter is just a translation of your sales pitch into words. Make it count.

I've divided the whole process into three parts: getting the reader's attention, making them trust you and making them the offer. Everything is divided into sections, but that doesn't mean you have to "strictly" use every option in here. Adapt the template to your particular product or service, and make sure you **review other sales letters** before writing your own.

Part 1 – Get Their Attention

Get their Attention

Feeder / Pre-headline

Before you shake up the reader's attention by pitching your headline, here's a nice strategy to lead them to it – use a one-line feeder statement to build up your headline. This isn't necessary, and a lot of people don't use it while making outrageous profits, but the reasoning behind it is compelling – by giving readers a "leading" statement (perhaps by introducing the core need – discussed later), you **make them more susceptible** to your headline, which is all about providing the reader a cure for their problems.

Headline

The headline must be taut yet compelling; short and sweet, but at the same time it should **make the reader sit up and take notice**. As the first-half of the most important part of the sales letter – a powerful headline/ sub-head combo will determine whether the readers moves beyond "Dear Reader" or not – the headline must be absolutely perfect, or as near as it gets. Take the biggest, most valuable benefits of your product, plug them in your headline (transform it into a question if you wish) and **use proven, attention-grabbing words**.

The lead / Sub-head

Now that you've got your reader's attention (through the headline), reel them in by giving them a promising 1-2 sentence "**teaser**". The sub-head is an essential part of a sales letter – it gives the reader more details on the offer, outlines the promises / benefits of your product.

A "Before You Start" message

Not every sales letter uses this approach (Corey Rudl made this popular), but the point is to capture the attention of the reader who doesn't have much time. They might just click away from your website unless you **quickly tell them what you are offering**, and give them a way to come back / remember you. The quick summary will help the reader judge if your sales letter is worth his time, and if they find your offer interesting, they are bound to bookmark you and come back for more.

A personalized greeting

In a sales letter, you cannot do much more than say “hello dear reader”. But in some cases, it helps if you can “**label**” the reader – for example, if your product is designed to build traffic for websites, you could start your sales letter by saying: “Dear Frustrated Website Entrepreneur” or something similar. Another common technique is to introduce yourself (giving just your name is fine) and give the sales letter a timestamp – this isn’t necessary, but it helps build the image that the sales letter is a **personal item** – from the author directly to the reader.

Hold Their Interest

Once you’ve enticed your reader into giving your sales letter more than a few seconds of attention, you have to “hook” them before they lose interest. This is where you lead up to the story by laying the groundwork (the reader’s need/problem, and your position as giving them a solution).

Identify the burning need

Your readers have a problem; your product / service will solve that problem. It’s that simple. Here, focus on talking to the reader (a member of your targeted audience) about their **pain** – caused by a need for a solution or by a problem they are facing (baldness, unemployment, lack of money, etc.) A big part of a sales letter is using bullet points and mini-lists – emphasize the burning need, cover it in **bold** and say it loud and clear.

Paint a vivid picture of pain

Once you’ve pointed out the need, focus on the pain it causes. Selling is about evoking an **emotional response** – put only those words on the sales letter that work towards getting that response (paint a picture using powerful, emotion-provoking words). Use a list of problems that it causes (but save the stories for later).

Paint a contrasting picture of pleasure

After emphasizing on the pain that the problem causes, focus on the pleasure / absence of pain that your product creates. Lists again, but the key here is to get the **contrast** right.

Till now, you’ve covered the first hurdle; getting your reader interested enough to read your sales letter and listen to your offer. But right now, they still have their **BS filter** on active, and to get to their emotional core, you have to turn that off first. To do that, you have to...

Part 2 – Make Them Trust You

Once you have their attention and you’ve successfully convinced them that you are going to solve their problem by the end of the sales letter...

Build credibility

Tell the readers why you are **uniquely qualified** to help them – this part is very, very important, even if you keep it short. If you don’t have anything substantial to skate your claim on as an expert, then move on to the next bit, but even a newbie in the online business world has some form of credibility based on their life experiences. So think hard; you can’t short-sell the readers by putting up credentials that your readers can better (i.e. your background is nothing to boast about), but by not building on your background you’re losing a bit on the credibility quotient.

The Story

Selling is, amongst other things, about **tapping the emotional wells** of your prospects. If you do it right, they will be happy to buy from you. But to tap into those positive emotions effectively, you have to bypass

the BS filter most people have when they come face to face with a sales pitch.

The key to do this, of course, is by telling them a compelling, authentic and uniquely relevant story. You don't have to have the knack of Steinbeck or Kafka, but if you can piece together something that:

- The reader can **relate** to
- Proves to the reader how your solution **solves the problem**
- Helps the reader **trust** you more / builds your **credibility**

You've got it made.

Before revealing the product, tell your readers how it provided a real-world solution to someone's needs – yours or someone else's. The **litmus test** of a good story (and signs that your sales letter will do well) is the story pulls in the reader so well that by the end of it, the reader has **forgotten** they were reading a sales pitch!

If you can make the reader forget that you are selling them a product even for an instant, they will immediately lose their bias and trust you that much more. And once that bond of trust is formed, it's in your power to make or break the deal.

Summarize the benefits of your product

While I've said summarize, this should be an opportunity to drive across in the plus points of the product hard – at this stage you have the reader's trust (if you've done the story part right). Strike while the iron's hot – this is **your best chance** to make the sale. Use bullet points, bold text (sparingly) and above all, words that sell.

Testimonials

People don't buy rationally – their financial actions are usually based on **emotional decisions**, which are later rationalized. In all this, the two biggest factors you can use to your advantage are that **people love recommendations** and that **people trust experts**. In this case, if you are quoting an expert's opinion on your product, that expert must be well-known in your industry (or an industry which your target market will be most familiar with). The 'expert' opinion gives you a credibility that you have the right knowledge and that you can back up what you are claiming with results. Testimonials from users and other business owners are important as well, as they give you a different sort of credibility: that you are not out to scam them, and that your product works for **other people 'just like your reader'**.

The key to a good testimonial is to include as much information about the person writing it as is allowed by them. At a bare minimum, you should include their name and website address (always good advertising), or their name and email address, if they agree to provide it. Some skeptics might want the assurance of being able to call fellow customers to check up on your business, especially if the price you are charging is high.

Some marketers prefer inundating the sales letter with testimonials – it's an **'in-your-face'** method of showing the reader that there are SO many satisfied customers that the investment becomes a no-brainer, as long as you are convinced that you have that particular need or problem this product addresses.

Part 3 – Make Them An Offer They Can't Refuse

By this time, the prospect should be emotionally tuned-in to your message, rid of her BS filter and ready for you to make the offer. If you've done everything right, your reader will actually be thinking about how much they can afford to pay for your product – notice that this bypasses the whole "do I need to buy this?" syndrome. They've **already made the decision**; you just have to convince them that the price is right.

Restate the benefits

If you wish (and if you have the sales material and certainly if your product is high-priced), sell the benefits of your product a bit more (and this time summarize the best aspects). This section is **optional**, but it builds up nicely, maintains a constant flow and reminds the reader what they are getting.

Build up the Bonuses

A bonus has become a must in online businesses. If you are selling software, web templates, information products or even services, bonuses are getting more and more outrageous. The good part is that if you can

position the bonuses to fully complement your product, then you'll provide the right incentive for the reader to invest. A **common mistake** information product marketers make is to reuse the bonuses in other promotions – that's a fine tactic, but it short-changes the readers who paid hard cash for them. Don't do this to your customers – if you are giving them a bonus, make it highly relevant to the main product, and make sure it's not given away for free anywhere else.

Build up to the Price

Cue in to **emotional triggers** by asking the reader to put a price tag on the satisfaction / benefits they would receive on solving their particular problems. Make this part count, but keep it short.

Sell The Price

It's common to quote a higher price and then say that you're offering a lower price 'just because you feel like you should give back to the community'. This tactic is good, but latest strategies go a step further. Follow the same pricing routine as before, but position it as a testing phase – i.e. the price will definitely **rise** after the testing phase is over. Your goal is to convince the reader to act immediately, **to buy now** – one of the best ways to do that is to convince them that if they wait, the next time they come by they'll have to pay more.

And of course, follow up on the promise – increase the price to your 'next threshold' after a few weeks or so.

Risk Reversal

The "110%, better than your money back" guarantee is well known in direct marketing. To make it absolutely safe for your potential customers, allow them a "**no-questions asked money-back guarantee**". Of course, they get to keep the product and the bonuses. In case of hard goods (books in print, course material, DVDs, CDs, etc.), you'd do well to ask for them back before giving refunds. While this is more a question of how you conduct your business, having a risk reversal guarantee that assures the potential customer that you are taking all the risk of the transaction will make them that much more ready to buy.

Sign-off

The new trend in sales letters is to 'sign' the letter to make it more personal – it's just an **optional** perk, but during tests this simple tactic has increased sales, plus it takes a few minutes to put in, so go ahead and do this as well.

The PS (postscript)

Use multiple P.S. messages to **remind the reader** of the offer – the problem it solves, the bonuses, the time limit before the price is raised, etc. These aren't absolutely necessary, but they help in giving the reader the most important points that they should keep in mind (according to you) as they make the purchase.

Advanced Copywriting Techniques...

Phew. There you have it – a **personal template** you can use to build winning sales letters quickly and without mistakes.

In the next lesson, we'll cover the...

“advanced” techniques internet gurus use to maximize their online profits!



Brad Callen
Professional SEO
<http://www.seoelite.com>

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