

# 10 Ways to Improve Your Brochure

## #1 *Know your audience*

Before you write a word of copy, determine who'll read it. Will it be a consumer? The president of a small company? A design engineer for a store fixture manufacturer? A man? A woman? A Generation X'er? An empty nester? The better you understand your intended audience—the better you can tailor your message and language directly to them.

## #2 *Focus on communicating benefits*

24 hour hot lines. Overnight delivery. 10 gigabytes of memory. What do these things mean to the red-hot prospect—**NOTHING!** That's because they're all features. Features give the prospect details about the product. But they don't indicate what the prospect gains from the product. Those are benefits and they're what the prospect really listens for. For example:

- “Save \$1,000 over the course of a year.”
- “Contact us when it conveniently works into your schedule.”
- “Never worry about available storage.”

These are benefits and they'll turn a prospect's head.

## #3 *Incorporate lots of pictures*

Pictures capture a reader's emotions. If the reader 'sees himself' in a picture, he'll be more likely to keep reading the brochure. After you know who your audience is, craft pictures and visuals that speak directly to them. Capture your reader's emotions and you'll capture their attention.

## #4 *Use captions with all your pictures*

I don't know about you, but when I 'read' People magazine, I just scan the pictures. Then, I'll read the captions to understand the story behind the picture. And if the picture and caption intrigue me—then, and only then—will I read the whole story. Make each caption explain who (or what) is in the picture, what they're doing, and how they've benefited from your product or service.

An example might be “*Joe Client (right) and I am developing his company's first marketing plan. Joe's marketing plan has helped him stay in front of his prospects and made him worry less about finding new business.*”

## *Get names in your materials*

Whenever I publish my marketing newsletter The Strategist, I list customer & company names in my 'Champions' box. After each newsletter goes out, I usually get someone asking me how I know such-and-so. Whether you're a service provider or a manufacturer, you'll strengthen your marketing effort by facilitating word-of-mouth. Listing and thanking customers and companies is one good way to do this.

#### **#5 *Break up copy***

Today's busy person scans brochures. There just isn't time to read every word. Use subheads (like these boxes I'm using here) to break up your copy into digestible chunks. That way, a reader can scan your brochure and quickly find the areas that apply to her.

#### **#6 *Provide clarion calls to action***

Sales people know you always close for the sale. Marketers know you always provide a call-to-action. 'Send us a check for \$9'. 'Call for more information'. 'Write for more details'. Sprinkle these calls-to-action liberally throughout your brochure and there will be no confusion about what the reader should do next.

#### **#7 *Keep a flexible format***

What do I mean by this? Develop a pocket folder (either original artwork or purchased at OfficeMax). Then, fill the pockets with a variety of inserts that match up with your prospects unique needs. Why do I support this 'mix and match' approach? Because no two prospects are alike. One of my prospects may want to know about marketing plans while another only wants to know about developing a direct mail campaign. One of your customers may want to know about your products, while another wants to know about your add-on services. With a flexible brochure format you can develop two very different brochure packets for each.

#### **#8 *Provide several ways for prospects to respond***

Some will call. Others will mail. Still others will email. And some may just want to check out your website. Each of your prospects is at a different point in their buying decision. The more options you provide for response—at differing commitment levels—the more response you'll get.

#### **#9 *Let some humor show through***

People want to know your company has a personality. Paragraph upon paragraph of dry copy doesn't let a personality shine through. Occasionally make 'em chuckle. It'll help break the ice and may just be the nudge they need to pick up the phone and call you.

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