



DIRECT FORUM

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Direct Forum is a free e-mail newsletter containing useful direct marketing tips, news updates and how-to information. It's convenient, informative and I am not trying to sell you anything!

This month's topics include:

- 1. THE LONG AND SHORT OF WHAT REALLY WORKS CREATIVELY. PART EIGHT. SHOW, DON'T TELL**
- 2. I BELIEVE IN WHAT JOHN CAGE ONCE SAID. "I can't understand why people are frightened of new ideas. I'm frightened of the old ones."**
- 3. HERE'S ONE NEW IDEA**
- 4. SURPRISING FINDINGS ON WHY DONORS STOP DONATING**
- 5. FINALLY, WE ALL NEED TO DO SOME SELF-ANALYSIS. HERE'S MINE.**

SHOW, DON'T TELL

We all know how important it is to show rather than tell because it involves the audience. As a teacher, I know that all too well.

As a copywriter when you say, "The girl was beautiful' you are telling the reader something about a particular person."

But if you said, "I was stunned by her beauty and elegant grace as she walked past me, her perfume drifting in the air, with shoulders erect, her blue eyes wide and sparkling," you are painting a picture with words.

The moment we visualize the picture you're trying to paint, you've shown us, not told us, what we should see.

Many words like "beautiful, attractive, fabulous, fascinating" are words that "tell" us what to think. They reveal in specifics what is unique about the person or event you are describing.

As a writer you have the power to take charge and draw



THOMAS HARDY



your readers in.

You want to place the reader in the scene. One of the greatest masters of all time at doing just that was **Thomas Hardy**. He literally transported you inside every scene he was describing.

As an art-director you have a bigger canvas to work with.

You can show a photograph of the offer or better you can show your product in use.

You can reveal your product size in relationship to other objects or even show it in the actual size if possible.

You can crop a picture tightly to reveal its essence by removing all parts of a picture that are unnecessary to tell the story. The reader's mind will automatically fill in any missing parts.

You can explain what is being shown by using captions or call-outs below the photographs or illustrations.

You can show a picture of the person you are describing in the copy. After all, we know how many words a picture is worth.

I BELIEVE IN WHAT JOHN CAGE ONCE SAID. "I can't understand why people are frightened of new ideas. I'm frightened of the old ones."

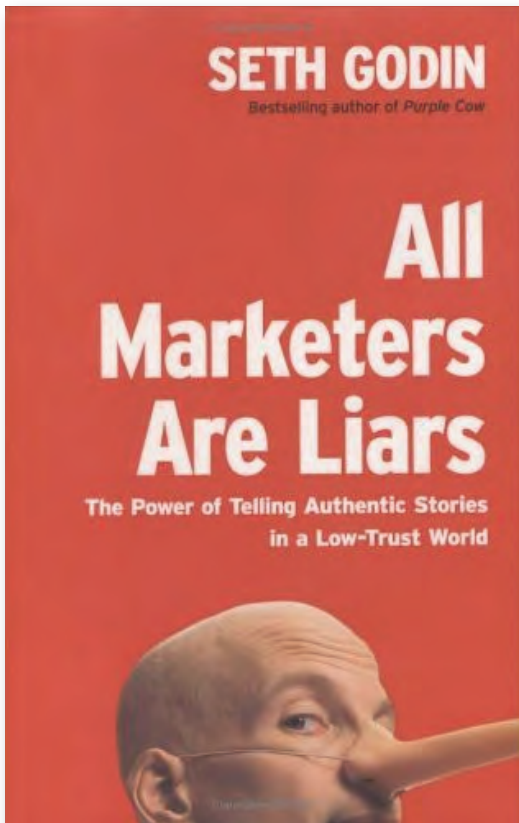
The most powerful single word in direct marketing is no longer "FREE".

It's "SO?"

What most people don't realize is that when your reader receives a direct mail message in any form, from a television commercial to a text-message, they glance at it and say, "**So? What's the big deal?**"

In his last book ***Purple Cow: Transform Your Business by Being Remarkable***, **Seth Godin** stressed that the key to success was to find a way to stand out from the herd--to be the purple cow in a field of monochrome Holsteins.

In his new book, ***All Marketers Are Liars***, he clarifies this



point more explicitly.

I have found that getting people's attention today is harder. Consumers don't notice anything until they decide to pay attention.

To help them decide, you either have to find a unique way to present your product or send them something they have already expressed an interest in. The latter one can be a challenge because interests change often.

Words, colours, typefaces, and images—all play a critical part in getting people's attention.

One easy way to pass this test is to have someone who doesn't know your product or service open your package and scan it quickly. Then have them tell you what they thought you were trying to get across..

If they can't reflect it back to you accurately, rework it until someone can. Then it's ready.

HERE'S ONE NEW IDEA

For 'Not-for-Profit Organizations':

Mitt Romney's current political campaign for the US presidential nomination includes an innovative way to raise funds. He asked his supporters to auction off items through eBay and to donate a small portion toward his campaign.

Similarly, many large and small charities can request that their staff, volunteers and friends contribute by auctioning off things either on eBay, at an event auction or at a garage sale.

SOME SURPRISING FINDINGS ON WHY DONORS STOP DONATING

Not to sound like **David Letterman** and without a drum roll, here are some findings by the Indiana University Center on Philanthropy (published in FRM Weekly).

They surveyed 1,000 lapsed donors from nine charities. The study yielded the following "**Ten Reasons Why Donors Stop Giving**":

10. Charity did not inform donor how contribution was used (1.7 percent)
9. Charity asked for an inappropriate donation amount (3.1 percent)
8. Charity did not remind donor to give again (3.3 percent)
7. Charity's communications were inappropriate (3.6 percent)
6. Death (5.2 percent)
5. Donor relocated (6.7 percent)
4. Donor still supports charity by other means (6.8 percent)
3. No memory of ever supporting charity (11.4 percent)
2. No longer able to afford support (22.3 percent)
1. Feeling that other causes were more deserving (26.5 percent)

As you can see the Number 1 reason why people said they moved from one charity to another was that the charity that they moved to was more persuasive in convincing the donor that their charity was more deserving.

If you can do that creatively, then even the Number 2 reason can be largely overcome because we know that the two main groups of people who give are the very rich and the poor. And while the rich are able to donate larger amounts, the poor donate a larger proportion of their income. Both groups need to be touched.

FINALLY WE ALL NEED TO DO SOME SELF-ANALYSIS. HERE'S MINE:

I received a wonderful follow up e-mail from fellow copywriter **Bob Knight** of Vancouver. You'll recall I published the original email in my November issue.

His latest:

Hi Billy.

I mused in my last email to you about whether UNHCR was still using the cardboard mailing. The answer: Yes. I just received one today.

You ought to be getting royalties on that package.

Bob

Another thing that **Seth Gordon** mentions in both his books, ***Purple Cow: Transform Your Business by Being Remarkable*** and ***All Marketers Are Liars*** was that each one of us should try and discover what is different or unique about our organization or us. As he said, the key to success was to find a way to stand out from the herd.

This led me to examine myself and here is my conclusion:



Why do my packages work so well? Why do so many become control packages? I think that's because I am an art-director as well as a copywriter, which allows me to think visually as well as verbally.

I have used a piece of cardboard, a toothbrush, a band-aid, or a sugar pack to tell the essence of a story. Even my other samples have a strong leaning toward art-direction. I try to involve the reader and drive a story. My packages are created to draw people in.

To see what I mean simply go to the 'showcase' section on my website: www.designersinc.ca

Let me know if you agree or disagree. After all, as a direct marketer, I am a sucker for response and I would love to get yours.

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- To participate, send me an e-mail with your suggestions.
- To post a comment, please include your name, e-mail address and your thoughts.

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