

# 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 TEN  
THE POWER OF WORDS**
- 2. WORDS THAT WORK IN ADVERTISING**
- 3. TO GET YOUR MESSAGE ACROSS YOU HAVE TO PROVIDE CONTEXT SO YOU CAN  
EXPLAIN RELEVANCE**
- 4. A FEW WORDS ABOUT IMAGES**
- 5. A NEW SURVEY THAT REVEALS WHAT THE PUBLIC THINKS OF DIRECT MAIL,  
ESPECIALLY CHARITABLE DIRECT MAIL**
- 6. BOB STONE'S LATEST BOOK "SUCCESSFUL DIRECT MARKETING METHODS" IS  
A COMPLETE CHANGE IN THINKING**

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## THE POWER OF WORDS

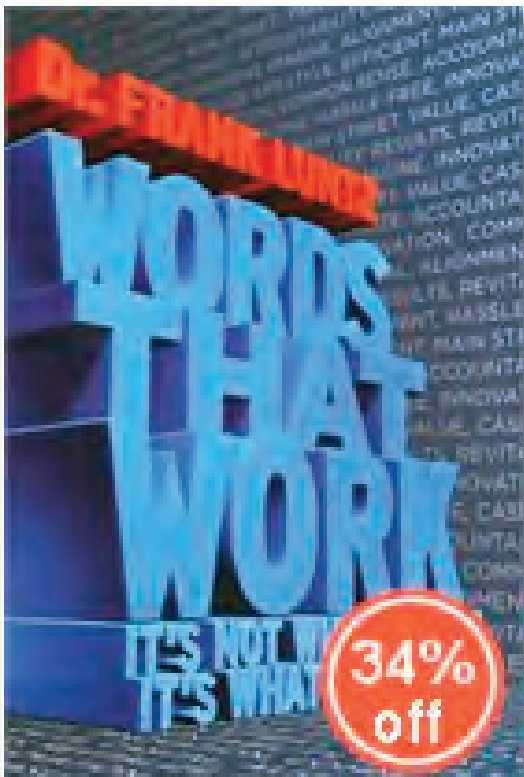
Words from the twisted mind of a sinister person like Adolph Hitler have incited an entire nation to commit heinous acts against others and have lead people to blindly go to war against other nations.

Words, when uttered by a person who embraces nonviolence like Gandhi, have inspired an entire nation to rise up and demand their independence.

Such is the power of words.

There's an excellent book on the market by *Dr. Frank Luntz* called: **WORDS THAT WORK. IT'S NOT WHAT YOU SAY, IT'S WHAT PEOPLE HEAR.**

Although written for people in politics this book is also great for writers.



The Boston Globe describes Dr. Luntz, a corporate and political communications consultant, as the hottest pollster in America.

How often have you become upset by what you thought a friend said only to find out later it was not what he or she meant at all.

**Or remember when Nixon said, “*I am not a crook.*” What people really heard was that he was a crook.**

As copywriters words are our strongest weapons. We must choose them carefully because of the potential powerful emotional weight they can carry.

Just look up ‘word’ in Roget’s Thesaurus and you will find 160 alternatives.

The task becomes harder when we string words together to communicate.

*Martin Luther King, Jr.* was a master at choosing effective words. “***I have a dream.***” is packed with sentiment and overflowing with hope.

Other lines that we all remember:

***“The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”***

***“Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.”***

**Without words, history would be silent, literature non-existent and science crippled and that’s not even addressing personal expression.**

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## **WORDS THAT WORK IN ADVERTISING**

How we use words in our business is crucial. Remember, we are not just selling a product we are also selling a promise.

Some of the best advertising gems are hidden in their slogans because they also ‘brand’ the product or service.

**L’Oréal:** Because you’re worth it

**AMEX:** Don't leave home without it

**General Electric:** We bring good things to life

**McDonald's:** I'm lovin' it

**Maxwell House coffee:** Good to the last drop

**State Farm:** Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there

And my personal two favourites:

**United Negro College Fund:** A mind is a terrible thing to waste

**Nike:** Just do it.

They have become imbedded in our psyches because they are short and contain the essence of what the product or company wants to express.

**And that is what good writing is all about.**

Here the latest one I have come up with for myself.

**Designers Inc.:** Draw from experience.

I would love to get your reaction, but more importantly, try it yourself. Just summarize, in as few words as possible, what you, your business or product stands for, but remember **"Draw from experience"** is already taken!

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**TO GET YOUR MESSAGE ACROSS YOU HAVE TO PROVIDE CONTEXT SO YOU CAN EXPLAIN RELEVANCE**

When writing you have to give people the 'why' of a message before you can tell them the 'therefore'.

This is often referred to as framing, or context, because it opens the way to explain why a particular message is important.

Relevance is essential because, if you don't know what matters to your audience, how can you convince them to listen to what you have to say, never mind sell something



**DRAW FROM EXPERIENCE**

to them. Try to see the world through your audience's eyes.

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## A FEW WORDS ABOUT IMAGES

How we string images together is equally important when it comes to producing TV commercials.

The Great Russian filmmaker *Sergei Eisenstein* was a pioneer in the juxtaposition of images or 'montage'. He believed that in filmmaking and particularly in using montages of shots, one and one made three.

He felt that the 'collision' of independent shots had a multiplier effect wherein 'each sequential element is perceived not next to the other, but on top of the other'. He said that we tend to fill in the missing story when we view images juxtaposed in a particular sequence.

For example, when we are presented with an image of a man with a knife raised to strike, followed by an image of a woman with raised hands screaming, we immediately understand that the woman is terrified that she is about to be attacked.

If, however, a pram tumbling down a flight of stairs follows the same image of the woman screaming, we feel her panic at what harm will come to the baby in the pram.

He described it as the mind taking two separate frames and then creating a complete a whole new conclusion.

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## A NEW SURVEY THAT REVEALS WHAT THE PUBLIC THINKS OF DIRECT MAIL, ESPECIALLY CHARITABLE DIRECT MAIL

A recent survey of over 2,000 people done in the UK that focused on the recipient's perception of charitable direct mail revealed the following:

1. **Mail addressed to recipients is highly likely to be read completely or in part by up to 75% of people.**
2. **The content of direct mail matter.**
  - One third of people give because of what is written in the letter



An example of a montage created by Humber College Students for "Bridging the Possibilities" – an internship program

- Three quarters give when they have a personal or family relationship with the cause.

**3. Regular donors appreciate why charities must use direct mail**

- 74% of respondents said they were happy to be contacted by direct mail by charities they support
- 53% think that direct mail is a good way for charities to raise money for their work
- 50% do not mind charities contacting them on a regular basis while 12% disagree

**4. People expect charities to respect their wishes to maintain mutually beneficial relationships**

- 86% of respondents would stop giving if a charity contacted them after being asked not to do so
- 70% want a say in how often charities can contact them
- 75% expect charities to respect their privacy and not swap lists with other charities

**5. Premiums or gifts are considered a waste of money and act as a turn-off**

- 90% of people think money spent on premiums might be better spent on the cause
- 69% believe charities deliberately add premiums or gifts to make people feel guilty about getting something for nothing
- An overwhelming majority stated that they would stop sending donations if they repeatedly received premiums from the same charity

**6. The optimum number of mailings acceptable from a charity is no more than 4 per year**

- Most people believe that up to three or perhaps four mailings a year is acceptable. Any more than that will result in them stopping to donate to the charity completely
  - Most people believe they receive 6 mailings every 3 months from different charities
- 7. People are now concerned more than ever about the environmental impact of direct mail**
- 80% of donors want their charities to be more environmentally friendly or conscious
- 8. The highest percentages of people who give to charities regularly are still women over 65 years of age**
- 9. Regular donors would like to see their charities attempt more innovative ways of fundraising**
- 75% welcome different ways to encourage people to donate
- 10. And the biggest surprise of all is that Unaddressed mail is just as likely to elicit a donation as addressed mail.**

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**BOB STONE'S LATEST BOOK "SUCCESSFUL DIRECT MARKETING METHODS" IS A COMPLETE CHANGE IN THINKING**

I just picked up Bob Stone's latest book "*SUCCESSFUL DIRECT MARKETING METHODS*" that he co-authored with Ron Jacobs.

Unfortunately it is also Bob Stone's last book. The legend passed away on February 26, 2007, while the editing of the eighth addition of *Successful Direct Marketing Methods* was being completed. Bob was 88.

What astonished me was that he refuted long-standing beliefs as to the importance of the various elements of a direct marketing program, which include list/media, creative, the offer and timing.

Most other books break down the elements as follows:

<b>LIST/MEDIA</b>	<b>OFFER</b>	<b>CREATIVE</b>	<b>TIMING</b>
<b>50%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>10%</b>

Bob's figures show that while list importance still ranks highest, other elements are gaining ground.

<b>LIST/MEDIA</b>	<b>OFFER</b>	<b>LAYOUT/FORMAT</b>	<b>COPY</b>	<b>TIMING</b>
<b>40%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>10%</b>

So the combined weight of creative (Layout/Format and Copy) is now 30% according to him and higher than the offer which is 20%.

In fact, he has expanded the creative segment substantially in the last version of his book.

Another positive aspect of this book is that it now includes all the latest technologies from Interactive to text messaging in this age of multi-channel communications.

I recommend it highly. It's published by McGraw Hill

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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.

**Let me remind you again that your name and/or e-mail address will never be shared, sold, circulated, or passed along to anyone else.**

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