



DIRECT FORUM

VOLUME 4. ISSUE 1

*** JANUARY 2008 ***

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!

HAPPY NEW YEAR

This month's topics include:

1. **I LOVE GETTING A RESPONSE AND I GOT PLENTY TO MY YEAR-END MAILING**
2. **THE LONG AND SHORT OF WHAT REALLY WORKS CREATIVELY. PART NINE. ASK A QUESTION**
3. **HERE'S ONE SURPRISING NEW RESEARCH FINDING**
4. **HOW THE LATEST TRENDS ARE AFFECTING DIRECT MARKETING?**
5. **LOOKING BACK, MOVING FORWARD**

I LOVE GETTING A RESPONSE AND I GOT PLENTY TO MY YEAR-END MAILING

I think I have been in the direct marketing business too long. Just like Pavlov's dogs, I am conditioned to getting all excited when I get a response.

This year I sent my traditional year-end gift (this time it was a magnifying glass) to over 250 clients, friends and colleagues, along with a personal letter.

I am happy to report that I got a great response, 14% and counting.

Since I share everything else with you, here's one great email that I got back, which I will cherish for a long time.

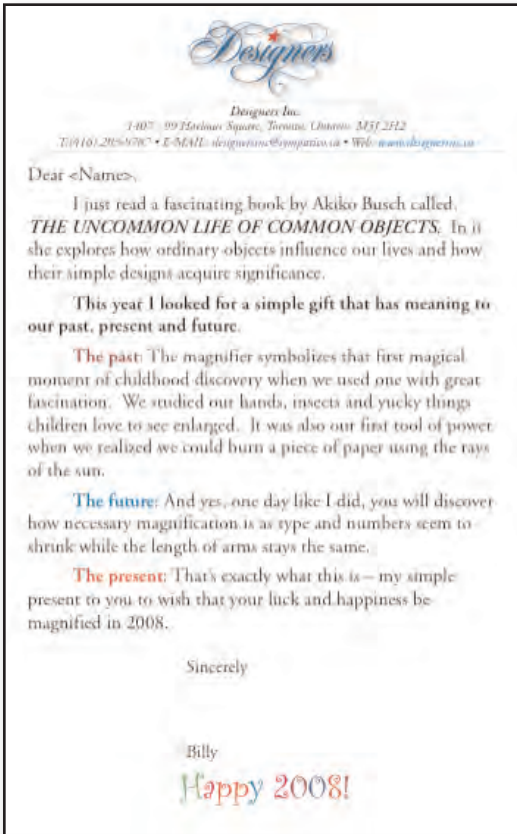
Hi Billy,

Thank you for putting a smile on my face.☺

After the crazy (but very beautiful) storm and a long day trying to get caught up, I decided to sort through my mail.

Compliments
 Billy Sharma
 email: designersinc@sympatico.ca
www.designersinc.ca

My Year-end gift
(A magnifying glass)



The accompanying letter

As soon as I saw the envelope with your name on it, I put the rest of the mail aside and proceeded to open your envelope with an almost child like anticipation – your Xmas mailings are always so unique and touching!

Wondering how you can possibly outdo yourself this year – as I got into the envelope – you managed to do it again! You outdid yourself and you put a great smile on my face.

Just like the other goodies you sent the previous years, this magnifying glass is going straight to my wallet. Now when I am stranded at a restaurant without my glasses, I will definitely think of you, as I am able to read the menu.

I hope you and your family have an amazing Xmas. Give me a call – I would love to get together for coffee or breakfast some time in the New Year.

Cheers,

***Mona Sharkawy
Senior Partner
KISP Sales & Marketing Solutions Inc.
Keeping it Simply Profitable!***

**Want to be included in my next year's holiday mailing?
Just email me your mailing address.**

**THE LONG AND SHORT OF WHAT REALLY
WORKS CREATIVELY. PART NINE.
ASK A QUESTION.**

If the object of writing is to get your message read, than here is one more way to get people's attention.

Ask a question.

People react best to messages that are participatory.

Rhetorical questions stimulate responses and responses by definitions are interactive.

There are, however, two ways to do this.

First, arouse curiosity in the headline so the reader will want to want to find out the answer in the body copy.

For example:

What are the five most important traits that make people more likeable?

Next, there is a simple involvement or trick question method.

For example:

Can you count the number of F's in the text below?



FACES OF FAMOUS PEOPLE ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE RECOGNIZED BECAUSE OF A SCIENTIFIC STUDY COMBINED WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF YEARS

Go ahead try this one, count the number of 'F 's in the above sentence.

How did you do?

If you counted just three then you are wrong.

Check it again.

FACES OF FAMOUS PEOPLE ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE RECOGNIZED BECAUSE OF A SCIENTIFIC STUDY COMBINED WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF YEARS

Normally the brain does not process the "F" in "OF".

So anyone who managed to counts all six F's on the first go is a genius.

But more about that in my next month's article: **IT'S NOT WHAT YOU WRITE, IT'S WHAT PEOPLE READ.**

Incidentally, after having watched many episodes of **LAW & ORDER**, I have discovered that the one profession that uses this strategy of asking rhetorical questions more than any other, are criminal lawyers. **Just thought I would throw that in.**

HERE'S ONE SURPRISING NEW RESEARCH FINDING

CAN YOU READ THE SCRAMBLED MESSAGE BELOW IN BLUE?

Surprisingly, 55% people can.

I cdnuolt blveiee taht I cluod aulacly uesdnatnrd waht I was rdanieg. The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid, aoccdrnig to rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, shwos taht it dseno't mtaetr in waht oerdr the ltteres in a wrod are, the olny iproamtnt tihng is taht the frsrit and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it whotuit a pboerlm.

This is because the human mind does not read every letter, but takes in the word as a whole. Amazing? And we always thought spelling was important.

Oh! For the other 45% who could not read the message, here's a hint. Just copy it. Then, place it in a word file and spell check will automatically reveal every misspelled word.

HOW THE LATEST TRENDS ARE AFFECTING DIRECT MARKETING?

One of the things that I have recently noticed is that rational and factual information is not enough. This applies as much to my class lectures as it does to direct marketing.

Recent studies show that facts, in fact, can be a turn-off.

So, if the information about a DM piece is too dry, too factual and too impassionate, the intended audience tends to become disinterested and disconnected.

Why?

Because, the world is not as rational as we would like to believe.

Today, noise and choice drive our daily lives and viewing habits.

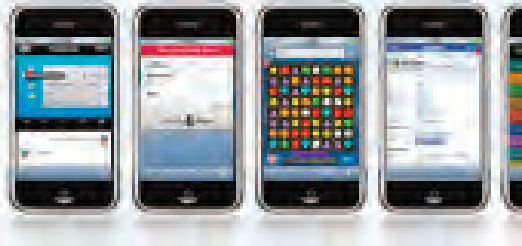
Look at what we are competing against. Most of the media hype is sensational news, a frivolous barrage about the latest blunders of celebrities, sports, fashion and entertainment people.

There are way too many distractions competing for

people's attention today.

So, how do you get noticed?

I believe that a single compelling inspiring case study for charities is most powerful. A great reason that benefits the target audience is more persuasive than all the facts and figures you can cram into your letter.



Donating money to a charity is an emotional process and has more to do with the heart than the brain.

However, a new product must provide a real difference and perceived value. Case in point: The iPhone.

LOOKING BACK, MOVING FORWARD

Thankfully 2007 was very busy for me, working with old and new clients and I thank them all.

Four recent new clients, my regular column '**Direct & Personal**' in ***Direct Marketing News***, my part-time teaching jobs at **Seneca** and **Humber Colleges** and this monthly Newsletter '**Direct Forum**', promise a busy 2008 too.

Teaching in 2007 was especially gratifying as my students did a wonderful job of incorporating what they learned into unique and compelling DM projects.

As you know from past newsletters, I give them real assignments. I don't believe in make-believe assignments. The students either find a real client and project or I give them one.

One of the Seneca groups produced a great direct mail piece for **Integra Foundation**. With their permission it will most probably be turned into an actual project for the charity.

Another group of four students from Humber College did an outstanding job for the **Toronto Rape Crisis Centre**.

They contacted the client, proposed an integrated marketing plan for them and then created all the material, including a fabulous video to be aired on **YouTube**.

They also included material for **MySpace** and **Facebook**. And these were students whose classroom concentration was not even the creative side..

They intend to involve other college students and businesses around a fun social event, because as they observed, the best social fundraising blurs the boundary between people having fun and the hard and fast side of raising money.

MySpace now ranks second only to mobile content (e.g., ring tones, games, etc.) on the list of services, information, and applications teens want to access on their phones. It ranks even higher than e-mail and instant messaging. (As reported by *Jupiter Research*)

This group hopes to raise \$150,000 for the charity and I have no doubt they will do just that.

Never underestimate the power and fresh thinking of young minds.

Last semester a group of my students worked on a project for **UNICEF**. The client loved it.

If there is any one who wants to give my students a challenge with a real project at no cost, simply email me back.

I will be teaching another 80 or more students this winter.

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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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