



DIRECT FORUM

VOLUME 3. ISSUE 11

*** NOVEMBER 2007 ***

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 SEVEN.
(TRY PAINTING A PICTURE WITH WORDS.)**
- 2. A GOOD REACTION TO MY BOOK**
- 3. ANOTHER GREAT BOOK**
- 4. THE ULTIMATE IN GIVING AND FORGIVING**
- 5. WHO INSPIRES US?**

THE LONG AND SHORT OF WHAT REALLY WORKS CREATIVELY. PART SEVEN. (TRY PAINTING A PICTURE WITH WORDS.)

When you have a hard time expressing yourself with simple words you can try painting a picture with them by using a metaphor.

And help the reader grasp the essence of what is being said. Good metaphors work because they transfer the qualities of one thing into another by creating a word picture instantly.

As the poet **Robert Frost** explained, "*An idea is a feat of association, and the height of it is a good metaphor.*"

Here's an example: **David Ogilvy** once told his audience: "*Ladies and gentlemen, unless your advertising is built on a big idea, it will pass like a ship in the night.*"

Instantly, they thought, "*A ship in the night? No, we don't want that!*"

Another great writer who used metaphors was **William Shakespeare**:



"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players; They have their exits and their entrances."
(As You Like It)

"This bud of love by summer's ripening breath may prove a beauteous flower when next we meet". (Romeo and Juliet)

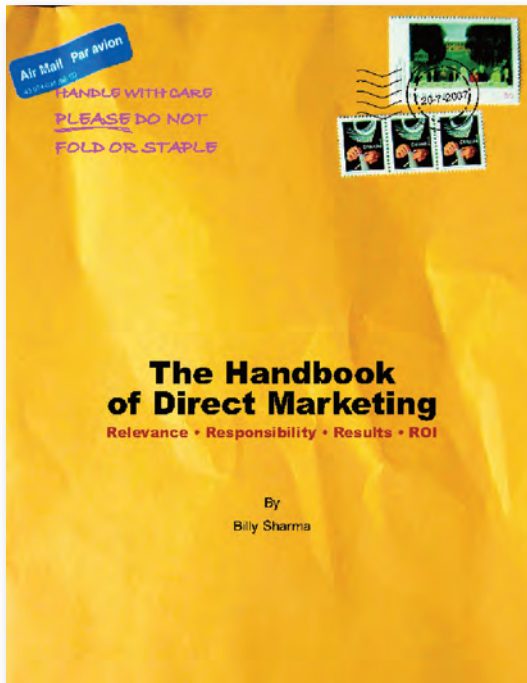
Muhammad Ali in his prime used words as deftly as his punches. Here are some of his unforgettable barbs:

"Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee."

"I'm so fast that last night I turned off the light switch in my hotel room and was in bed before the room was dark."

What a shame that Parkinson's disease has silenced this legendary heavyweight champ today.

A GOOD REACTION TO MY BOOK



I am glad to report that I got a 2% response to my book, ***The Handbook of Direct Marketing***, and some great comments.

Fellow copywriter Bob Knight of Vancouver wrote:

Hi Billy,
I had time on the weekend to read your book more carefully. You've really done a bang-up job! It's so comprehensive and yet easy to read. The case studies really add something too.

BTW, I tried to beat your UNHCR control a couple of times and failed. That was a great mailing. They were using it a few years ago. I wonder if they still are.

Again, many congrats on your book.

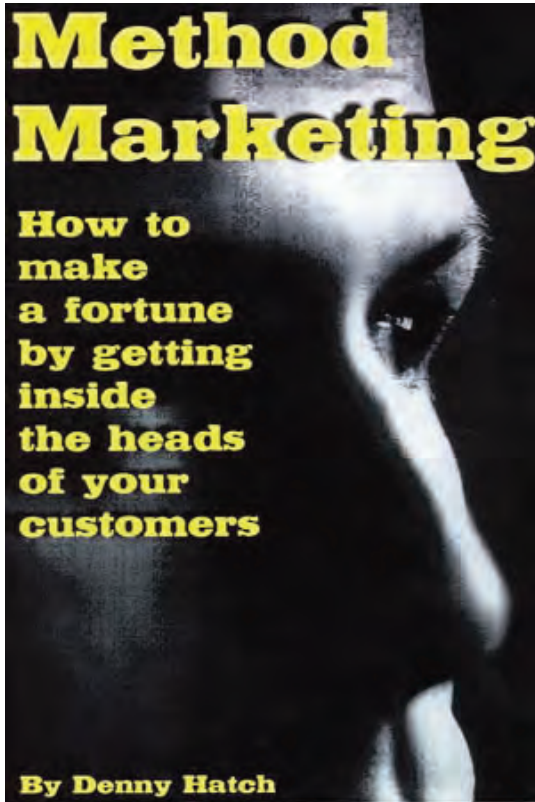
Bob

Incidentally there are still a few copies left. For ONLY \$20.00 (including shipping and handling) it's yours for a risk-free 30 days trial.

YES, A RISK-FREE 30 DAYS TRIAL OFFER FOR \$20

Reserve your copy by emailing your mailing address to:
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ANOTHER GREAT BOOK



A great book that I recently read features some of the best examples of copywriting I've ever seen.

The book is *Method Marketing* by **Danny Hatch**. It lists and prints entire excerpts of classic letters of some of the best writers of our time.

In it he unveils how **Father Bruce Ritter**, founder of Covenant House, single handedly created a six million dollar charity with his powerful personal appeals.

He tells how **Mel Martin** hooked the reader with fascinating teasers like:

WHAT NEVER TO EAT ON AN AIRPLANE

Or

HOW TO GET VIP TREATMENT IN HOSPITALS

(All patients are not treated equally)

He reports how **John Peterman** of J. Peterman Company used prose to set his catalogues apart (Yes, the same **J. Peterman** featured in the **Jerry Seinfeld** show.)

He relates how publisher **William Bonner's** powerful copy in his *International Living Newsletter* made **Agora Publishing** into an \$80 million empire.

However, my favorite is a wonderful letter published by **Robert Shnayerson**, editor turned copywriter, when the publication **QUEST/77** was launched. His first direct mail letter brought in 600,000 subscribers.

It's a six-page letter published in its entirety and this is how it began:

"I'm Robert Shnayerson, editor of QUEST/77 – a new magazine for closet optimists, people who suspect the world is NOT going to hell. You're invited to become a Charter Subscriber, receive the premier issue and save 25% while you're at it."*

Dear Reader:

What made this letter so powerful is that **Robert Shnayerson** used a technique that is hard to duplicate. He used passion and compassion to spill his guts out to talk about what he felt so strongly about.

I strongly recommend this book to every direct marketer and copywriter.

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THE ULTIMATE IN GIVING AND FORGIVING

I just read about the recovery of the Amish community in Nickel Mines, PA, where a gunman attacked a school and killed five girls and injured five more before taking his own life.

That same community is now making a donation to the killer's widow, because she has three children.

The article said: *"Many from Nickel Mines have pointed out that forgiveness is a journey, that you need faith... to make and hold on to a decision not to become a hostage to hostility."*

That's an extreme example, of giving and forgiving.

Imagine what kind of world we'd live in if more people forgave and gave the way of the Amish.

WHO INSPIRES US?

As a writer of the monthly column "**Direct & Personal**" in **Direct Marketing News**, I have had the opportunity to ask people who inspired them.

Now's it's my turn. Two persons who have inspired me are my wife **Ellen Nichols** and **Michael Johnson** of HJC new media.

I met Ellen back in 1989 when I did a free job for her when she was fundraiser for the Canadian Film Centre. Since then she has moved on to other charities including the University of Toronto and the YWCA of Greater Toronto and now works for Intega Foundation. She has dragged me along with her to help with fundraising and I have



Ellen Nichols

always been her best volunteer.

And she mine. She pushes me to the limit. She is more critical of what I produce than my clients and insists I rework a concept if she thinks it is not up to my usual high standards. She is my first and last critic. I wouldn't think of presenting a concept to my clients until she has checked it out, proofed and approved it. I trust her judgment completely.

Michael Johnson uses a gentler approach. Seven years ago when I wrote my first fundraising piece for him, he quietly handed me a Xerox copy of an article called, **"WRITING (FUNDRAISING) IS ALCHEMY"**.

That was his way of thanking me and telling me that he considered me to be a good writer. I have treasured that Xerox copy all these years because it means more to me than the many awards that I have won for my work.

Here's a passage from that article:

WRITING (FUNDRAISING) IS ALCHEMY.

Dross becomes gold. Experience is transformed. Pain is changed. Suffering may become song. The ordinary or horrible is pushed by the will of the writer into grace or redemption, a prophetic wail, a screed for justice, an elegy of sadness or sorrow. It is the lone and lonesome human voice, naked, raw, crying out...

Andrea Dworkin, *Life and Death* (Free Press, 1997)

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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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