

DIRECT FORUM

VOLUME 4. ISSUE 9

* * * * SEPTEMBER 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!

This month's topics include:

- 1. SOME MORE WAYS TO KEEP YOUR RECIPIENTS INTERESTED AND INVOLVED**
- 2. NEXT, LEARN TO WRITE FOR BROWSERS**
- 3. OVERCOMING THE OTHER RESPONSE OBSTACLE CALLED INERTIA**
- 4. PART 5: HOW DO WE ACQUIRE NEW PROSPECTS IN THE FUTURE?**

SOME MORE WAYS TO KEEP YOUR RECIPIENTS INTERESTED & INVOLVED

Last month I mentioned why so many appeals fail.

As I said, they fail because most recipients simply don't read them.

The reason: They don't have time in their busy, complex lives but more importantly— the material is simply not interesting enough.

As **David Ogilvy** once wrote, *"You cannot bore people into buying your product; you can only interest them in buying it."*

Last month, I gave you some hints on how to make your material interesting.

Here are two more that I have found successful in the past:

- 1. INFORM THEM** — Tell them something new
Example: Here's an Ad for The Hinck's Centre for Children's Mental Health:

BY THE TIME JIMMY GROWS UP, IT WILL COST WELL OVER \$100,000 ANNUALLY TO KEEP HIM IN PRISON.



SO LET'S INVEST IN OUR CHILDREN NOW, NOT IN MORE PRISONS.

Emotional disturbance is not physically detectable, yet statistics show that aggressive behaviour in young children reached 23% in 1991, and that 71% of seriously aggressive 6 year olds grow up to be violent, anti-social adults. The deterioration of mental health in children has now reached crisis proportions.

Today it costs \$70,000 annually to keep a young offender in prison. With inflation, in the next 10 years it will cost us well over \$100,000. In contrast, the cost of early effective intervention and treatment is a mere \$450 annually per child. If the new knowledge we have about effective prevention and treatment

could be applied today, this alarming trend could be reversed. But funds are urgently required for community based training, research, consultation and public education.

So please, give generously. Remember, you are investing in something very precious that affects us all. The future of our children.

THE HINCK'S CENTRE
for Children's Mental Health
Silverman Building, 114 Mainland Street
Toronto, ON, M4Y 1E1
Telephone: (416) 923-4567

Sponsored by The Saul A. Silverman Family Foundation



2. TEASE THEM —Tell them something interesting

Example: The outer envelope for a Camp Towhee piece asked the question:

"What's the biggest thing you can fit into an envelope?"

The piece inside revealed the answer: "A child's dream."

NEXT, LEARN TO WRITE FOR BROWSERS

What catches a browser's attention?

- The salutation
- A headline or Johnson box
- A captivating first sentence (keep it short no more than 10 words)
- Underlines (in direct marketing, use sparingly, in viral marketing, underline only words as hyperlinks)
- Bolded or italic sentences (use sparingly)
- Bulleted lists
- The closing
- Who signed it or the sender
- The P.S.
- Images (with captions or inserts)
- Free offers
- Things to click on (this applies to the numerous links to the donation page in viral marketing)
- Interactive features (in direct mail: scratch cards, involvement devices, a quiz, etc. In viral marketing: a button to click on to forward to a friend.)

OVERCOMING THE OTHER RESPONSE OBSTACLE CALLED INERTIA

As promised in last month's newsletter here are some suggestions:

1. MAKE THEM AN OFFER THEY CAN'T REFUSE

Most companies pull back from making an offer that is perfect for the target audience. They water it down because they are afraid that they may be giving up too much to gain too little. I believe the offer should be as rich

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW HAS DIFFICULTY WALKING, UNINARY INCONTINENCE OR MEMORY LOSS,

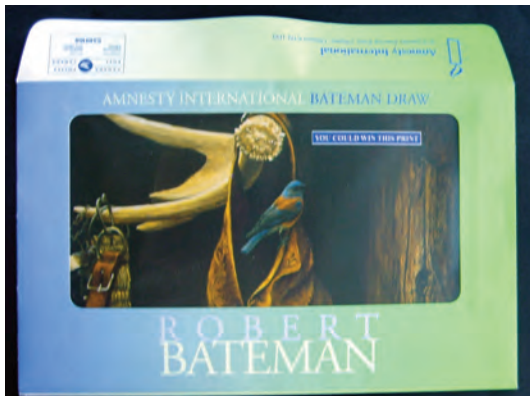
WE MAY HAVE SOME GOOD NEWS.

Call: 1-800-387-1575
Or send for your FREE Information booklet:

SB&H
555 Richmond Street West,
P.O. Box 103, Toronto, ON
M5V 3B1

as possible and pertinent to your target audience, however, I am not suggesting that one loses sight of the ROI. Remember, in a competitive market you want to get the best customers before they go to your competition.

Look what some cosmetic companies do – they give away bags full of their products. They know if you like it, you'll buy it again and again. My wife has bought Clinique's *Ginger Flower* lipstick for years strictly because they gave it to her to try and she was hooked.



2. INDICATE A SENSE OF URGENCY — Give them a good reason why it's important to act right now.

A sense of urgency is imperative to get your recipients to get off the fence and take action. Limited time offers or limited supply can do the trick.

PART 5: HOW DO WE ACQUIRE NEW PROSPECTS IN THE FUTURE?

I have saved this method of prospecting for last; I am talking about acquiring new prospects via viral or email marketing.

The rapidly growing success of this style of marketing cannot be ignored.

Four years ago my friend **Michael Johnson** of **HJC New Media** wanted me to get more involved with viral marketing since he was going to move his company in that direction. He even volunteered to pay others to teach me.

I resisted simply because I have my hands full creating direct mail and promotional packages for my clients, acting as a consultant, teaching at two colleges, writing a monthly column for the newspaper **Direct Marketing** and researching and writing this newsletter.

I also know how obsessive compulsive I am and that I would not be content to just craft the messages. Since I am also an art director, I would have to learn to create them from the ground up and recognized that I simply don't have enough hours in the day to do that.

I have always been intrigued with viral marketing though and have taken a stab at it from time to time, the last time

being in May when I helped craft an appeal for an emergency situation for **Christian Children's Fund of Canada**.

I cannot take full credit for it because I only helped edit the client's copy. The real credit goes to the Marketing Manager, **Philip Tome**. It generated \$10,000 online in the first week alone.

Now, there's a brilliant book by **Madeline Stanionis**, ***The Mercifully Brief Real World Guide to... Raising Thousands (if Not Tens of Thousands) of Dollars with Email.***

It is chock full of good examples of how to grow your email list and how to get a recipient to pass along an email petition to their friends.

It talks about how one email for HSUS (Humane Society of the United States) generated \$1 million online in one day and raised \$10 million altogether.

It's not as easy as it sounds as she points out. Email is cheap . . . but you can make very expensive mistakes if you don't do it correctly.

I strongly recommend this book.

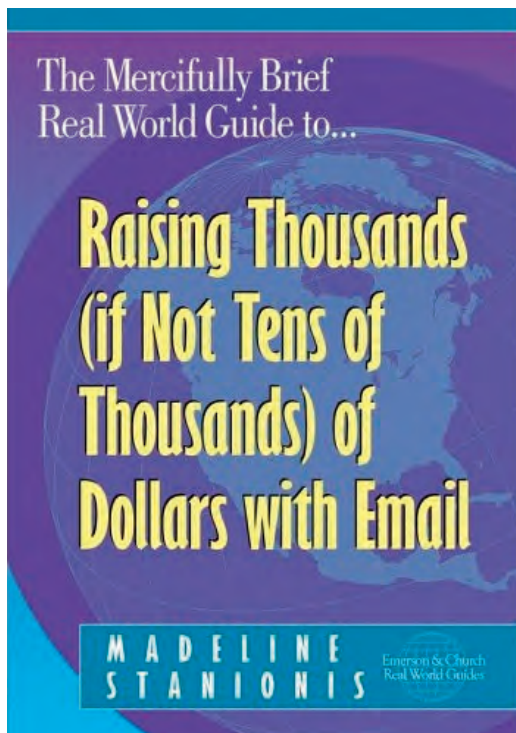
I would however, like to point out some differences between writing for direct marketing and writing for viral marketing.

While good copy writing applies to all media, writing for viral marketing has some distinct advantages and disadvantages:

THE ADVANTAGES:

1. **Writing in real time.** A crisis occurs and you have the advantage of getting your message out at once.
2. **Your style of writing can also be more up-to-the-minute.** An example from Stanionis' book: In a DM piece the message may be: "It was lovely to celebrate our anniversary with you last month."

In email the message could be: "I am writing this at



midnight, just getting home from the anniversary party. Whew, what a night. "

- 3. Emails are more personal by nature.** You use a less formal style. While a DM letter may say 'Dear Mr. Doe', an email can simply say 'Hello John'.

Remember emails largely go out to friends or people who have opted in.

- 4. Emails can be more conversational.** Once again an example from Stanionis' book: While a DM piece may say, "We are overwhelmed by your generous response" an email can say, "Wow! You overwhelmed us."

- 5. You can use contractions and symbols in emails.** Many writers have to toe a fine line between selling and becoming chatty. Not so with emails. The Internet has its own jargon of cryptic writing in symbols and contractions which appears more one-to-one.

THE DISADVANTAGES:

- 1. You are competing with more noise in viral marketing.** People are barraged with emails daily so you have to learn to cut through the clutter to be heard. You have to be more persuasive.
- 2. Sensitivity is a big issue.** Not everyone is willing to hand out information about friends or pass on your message to their friends, relatives or co-workers.
- 3. Getting a second gift from the same donor still remains a challenge.** Donors responding to viral marketing are younger, with less disposable income. Also it is harder to relay an emotional message via a simple email—unless you lead them to a 'streaming video' that has all the desired impact. And that's often a two-step process.
- 4. Emails have to be more precisely targeted.** They absolutely must be more relevant to the person receiving them in order to get the desired response.

OPT IN, OPT OUT, OPTIONS:

- To unsubscribe, send me an e-mail simply saying, "Please, remove".
- 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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