

Add spice to selling

Rob Hartnett

WRITING marketing and advertising is hard for many business owners but sticking to some basic guidelines can prove highly valuable.

Here are 10 tips to get you on the right track.

TIP ONE: GET THE STRATEGY RIGHT FIRST

You've heard the saying ... He's so good, he could sell ice to Eskimos? Well, I'd much rather be selling them heaters. Often people want more sales when they really could achieve the same result by re-packaging and/or increasing the price of what they are selling.

They might be selling cars and want the person to call for a free brochure — when they need to get people taking free test rides instead.

TIP TWO: WHAT DO YOU REALLY WANT?

The Spice Girls burst onto the music scene singing "Tell me what you want".

They could have been singing about what you need to do before any marketing activity takes place. What is the objective of the advertising?

Is it to get an order, get people to call you, build an online database or make an appointment?

Whatever it is, write it down and make sure all your team marketing team (including external parties such as your design agency) know it as well. Remember ... only ever "sell" one thing at a time.

TIP THREE: GET CREDIBLE FAST

While reading your ad, your prospect is constantly asking "So what?" Whether it's conscious or unconscious, it's for real and it's something you must deal with.

That's why you must tell them why they should believe what you're saying is true. You must present "evidence" in a convincing way that will win them over. You can do this with:

- Success stories.
- Case studies.
- Testimonials that focus on benefits.
- Endorsements from 'celebrities' of your target market.

Putting your testimonials, celebrity testimonials, case studies, or credibility boosters near the front will prospects overcome their fear.

TIP FOUR: TEST, TEST AND TEST AGAIN

Recently we had a new idea for a product, so to test it, we did eight different promotions with four different headlines and two different prices. We tested 1000 of each and here's what happened:

- Two promotions got 0 responses.
- Five promotions got between 1-5 responses.
- One promotion got 20 responses.

The best headline/price combina-

You could win: \$7000 prize up for grabs

READERS of *BusinessDaily* have the opportunity to win a package worth \$7000 that will inject fresh ideas into the way they do business.

Sponsored by business guru Rob Hartnett, from Business Performance International (www.businessperformance.com.au), the coaching package will be awarded for the best entry detailing an innovative business strategy for the new year.

The winner will receive a half-day BPI Full Medical Marketing Audit valued at \$2500, a copy of the BPI Entrepreneurs Marketing Kit valued at \$2500, and a three-month BPI Fast Track phone and email support package valued at \$2000.

TO WIN: Tell us in 25 words or less how you plan to take your business to the next level in 2007.

Send entries to bpicompetition@heraldsun.com.au or mail to Herald Sun Business Owner Competition, P.O. Box 14611, Melbourne, Victoria, 8001.

Entries close Friday, February

tion got 20 times the results of the worst. Imagine what would have happened if we only tried one, or we didn't monitor what we did?

TIP FIVE: GET A HEAD FOR HEADLINES

A headline is an ad for your ad. Some 80 per cent of your promotion's success or failure lies in what you say in your headline.

In order for it to be effective, a headline must promise a benefit (the biggest one you can find about your product). All too often people talk about "features" in their sales and marketing efforts.

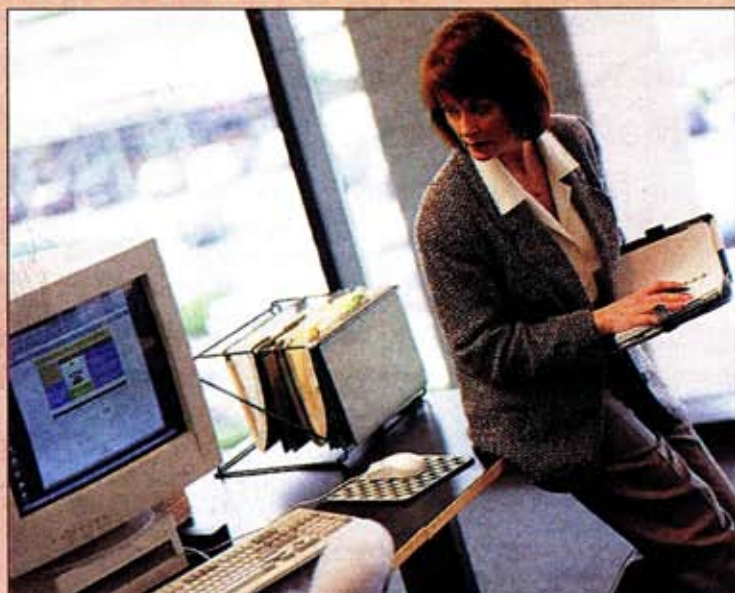
Once you learn to speak about the difference you or your product is going to make in your customer's lives, you'll be on your way to marketing heaven.

TIP SIX: FREE WORKS!

Nothing, I repeat nothing, works like a free offer. And I mean free. No conditions at all. A free offer is almost always the cheapest way to get lots of new customers quickly.

- If I had a coffee shop I'd be giving away free coffee.
- If I had a clothes shop a free T-shirt with every pair of jeans
- If I had a laundry/dry cleaning shop I'd offer \$10 worth of cleaning.
- If I wanted a job, I'd offer to work for nothing for a month.

The reason this works so well is because every business is built on repeat sales and referrals. And the



Check up: a coaching package could rocket your business into 2007.

quicker you build a customer base, the quicker these start to kick in.

16, 2007, and must include entrant's name and contact number. The most creative entry will be chosen as the winner. There will be one winner. The judges' decision will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.

The winner will be notified by telephone and will need to organise the substance of the package directly with BPI.

Details of the winning entry will appear in *Business Owner* on March 1, 2007.

TIP SEVEN: YOUR BEST COPYRIGHTERS ARE IN-HOUSE

If you want great ads or sales letters or sales people, simply take your best sales person and audio tape them during several sales, interviews or even role plays. Transcribe what they say and you will find they key words and "nuggets" what you are looking for. And what are you looking for? Fantastic ad copy.

TIP EIGHT: MAKE IT SCARCE

This is where you "take away" your prospect's chance to get your product or service. You might have heard of the "take-away close" which is used in selling. It's effective. You present your case to the prospect and when they get excited you let them know that there's really not that many left — or, they will have to wait six weeks to get it unless they orders today for example.

In your ad or letter tell your prospect that what you're selling:

- Is available only for a limited time.
- Is available at a discounted price for a limited time.

By creating scarcity, your prospect begins to think, "Gee, I'd better buy this before it's too late", which is exactly what you want them to think. You must get people to take action.

TIP NINE: GO DIRECT, YOUNG MAN

What gets measured gets managed. You would never dream of hiring a telesales team or a salesperson and not know if they made appointments or sales, would you? Advertising and marketing is no different and that is why direct response advertising is so popular. You must be able to measure what you do.

Don't get talked into wasting your money on anything you can't measure and, most importantly, anything that doesn't bring you extra sales. You can't pay bills with "image" and "exposure" (terms used by sellers of advertising). All it does is feed your ego and thins out your wallet.

TIP TEN: SHOW 'EM SOME LOVE

It never ceases to amaze me that there are still business people out there who don't even know who their customers are. Please get their names, email address and telephone numbers at least. There are many ways of doing this. It doesn't matter what you do, as long as you keep in touch with your customers.

It takes five to six times as much effort to get new customers as it does to keep a current one so show some love to your existing customers and see your profits lift.

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