



5 Headlines For You

By Ali Brown

In the world of marketing, your first impression -- your headline -- can lead to either sales success ... or failure.

It's important to realize that headlines work best when they appeal to your reader's interests (not yours). And not only can they *grab attention*, they can also make your message easy to read, convey your main selling points, and lead your customer to a sale.

Over the years copywriting pros have used several headline formulas that always work well. Here are my fab five:

1. The Question: "Are You Worried About Your Financial Future?"

A question headline automatically gets your readers involved in your message, because they answer it in their minds. Many people will read further into your letter, ad, or Web site copy just to find out what answer or solution you provide. Again, make sure the question focuses on the reader's interest, not yours. A bad example would be: "Do You Know What New Product We've Created This Year?" (No one cares but you!)

2. The How-to: "How to Get Thinner Thighs in 30 Days."

How-to headlines work very well, because people love information that shows them how to do something. (Thousands of book titles begin with "How to....") Think of the benefits your product/service offers and then try creating some "how to" headlines.

3. The Testimonial: "Jane Smith's Consulting Is Pure Magic -- Our Sales Have Increased by 30%!"

Why not let your clients do the selling for you? Their commendations can go a long way in convincing others to use your services. Tip: To appear credible, always include your clients' full names and the cities they live in.

4. The Command: "Boost Your Business Today!"

Turn your most important benefit into a commanding headline, such as "Make More Time for Your Family," "Look Younger Instantly!" and "Get 7 New Clients This Month." (By the way, throwing a number into your headline is another good tactic. And readers seem to like odd numbers as opposed to even.)

5. The News: "Introducing Our New 'Rest-Assured' Tax Service!"

Caution: This only works if you truly have something big to announce that is of interest to the reader. (Something that will make her life or business better.) Don't try to make news out of something that's not.

Once your readers know you have something they're interested in, they'll take the time to read your entire article, brochure, letter, ad, e-zine, or Web page. So put some TLC into creating headlines that entice!

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