

MARKETING

Treasures

The newsletter that helps librarians market the services of their libraries and information centers.

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Writing Persuasive Brochure Copy

Writing copy for brochures, flyers, direct-mail packages, and other promotion pieces is a difficult assignment for most people. What reads so naturally on professionally written pieces doesn't seem to come very easily when it is time to move the pencil or tap the keyboard. The truth is, writing copy for promotional pieces is a tough assignment — especially if you don't write every day. Even if you frequently write memos, reports, and analyses, and know how to overcome "writer blocks", writing the copy for a promotional piece requires a different style and technique than those used for writing memos or press releases.

First of all, let's define a promotional writing style. A professional copywriter uses words as tools to persuade and motivate readers to action. Readers are persuaded that something valuable is being offered, and then they are motivated to acquire it for themselves. This is the essence of effective promotional copywriting.

"Sell the sizzle and not the steak" is a common advertising phrase that expresses the principle of effective promotional copywriting. Library brochures that dwell on how to use the card catalog, how many titles are in the library collection, and borrowing limitations are not persuading the reader to use the library; they are telling the reader how to use the library. There is nothing wrong with informing people about how best to use the library's resources, but a brochure that concentrates on usage pointers is not a promotional piece — it is a guide. Guides are provided after an individual has made the commitment to the product or service.

A promotional piece, on the other hand, is used to extol the benefits of the library's resources. The copy uses terms and expressions that sell the information resources to the reader, and motivates them to action, i.e., contact the library and ask for a service or product.

By scanning direct-mail pieces, brochures, catalogs,

and newspaper and magazine ads you can begin to get an appreciation of just how persuasive good copy reads. In fact, after a while you might start noticing that many of the promotional messages can be put into categories: headlines that grab your attention; descriptions that appeal to emotions; benefit statements that promise improved status, pleasure, or money; closing lines that clinch the sale and move you to send in the coupon. Professional copywriters rely upon an assortment of proven methods to move the reader, and all of them rely on words that sell — infallible adjectives like "superb" and "irresistible", and phrases like "right at your fingertips" and "go with a winner".

Thinking of persuasive words and phrases is sometimes easier said than done. The easiest way to build a file of ideas is to clip them from advertisements. Your editor has found the *Wall Street Journal* to be a wealth of headline ideas. Here are some persuasive headlines and phrases from my files.

Success starts with _____.
_____ means business.
Some straight talk about _____.
We don't cut corners.
Check us out.
Now, more than ever, you need _____.
Can you afford not to...?
_____ where you want it, when you want it.
You're in for a pleasant surprise.
In today's competitive marketplace, _____.
Today, more than ever, _____.
We've got the solution to your _____.
What an opportunity!
Once you try us, you'll want to stay with us.
When every dollar counts, it's good to know that _____.
You'll receive these benefits.
Why settle for _____ when you can have _____?
You won't be disappointed.
You've searched long enough.

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Pearls of Wisdom

Clemson University is offering a series of seminars around the country on using desktop publishing and computer software to create effective visual communication pieces. For more information contact Kay Barnett at 803/656-2200 (fax 803/656-3997) or write to Kay at Clemson's Office of Professional Development, P.O. Drawer 912, Clemson, SC 29633.

Looking for promotion items to give away? The Nelson Marketing company has a nice catalog of goodies — more than 240 items including self-stick note pads, soft foam balls, litter bags, calendars, key tags, magnets, flashlights, cups, mugs, and a whole lot more. They'll readily send samples and order information. For a free catalog call 800/722-5203 (fax 414/236-7282) or write Nelson Marketing, 210 Commerce St., P.O. Box 320, Oshkosh, WI 54902-0320.

The next time you plan a brochure or package that will be mailed, make a mock-up of the piece(s) with the actual paper you are planning to use. By weighing the package on a postal scale you'll be able to estimate postal costs. If too expensive, you still have time to change the paper specifications to a lighter weight paper.

It's never too early to think about how you will thank your customers during the holidays. If time is short, money is tight, or you like to write your own greetings, consider using continuous feed letterhead that is preprinted with a holiday border motif. The letterhead

has a bright red and green holly border printed on ivory paper stock. The micro-perfed edges tear off to 8 1/2 x 11 sheets. It comes in packs of 50 sheets and 50 red envelopes, and appears as product number N-6238-4 on page 34 of the Business Book of the Miles Kimball Company, One East Eighth Avenue, Oshkosh, WI 54906. For a free catalog call 800-558-0220 (fax 414/426-1132).

If you work with science and technology information materials, it might interest you to know that National Science and Technology Week 1990 will be observed April 22-28, the same week as National Library Week 1990. This is a perfect opportunity to combine the two observances. For more information on the science and technology theme "Global Change, Our Common Future" write to the National Science and Technology Week, National Science Foundation, 1800 G. Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20550. For information on National Library Week write to the Public Information Office, American Library Association (ALA), 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611 or call 800/545-2433. In Illinois 800/545-2444. In Canada 800/545-2455.

While you're talking to ALA, ask them to send you information on their publication *PR Activity Report*. This quarterly publication offers some public relation tips, but mostly is a great source for public relations materials offered by ALA and other groups.

You can also ask ALA to send you a PR Info Bank packet. This will give you the winning entries from the Swap & Shop "Best of Show" competition held at the ALA Annual Conference. Available by inter-library loan through the ALA Headquarters Library.

Have you seen the new Post-it notes for fax messages? These handy little items can reduce paper waste by eliminating front cover sheets on informal fax messages. Look for them in your office supply store.

The Chicago Manual of Style isn't just for term papers. The 13th edition includes chapters on bookmaking, production and printing. Check it out. The University of Chicago Press, 1982, ISBN 0-226-10390-0.

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Back issues and Samples are \$7.50 for U.S. and Canada. Foreign orders add \$1.75.

Missing issues: Please report the nonreceipt of an issue within 30 days of normal receiving date. Missing issues requested after this time will be supplied at the regular back issue price.

The Marketing Treasures office may be reached via FAX. Dial 301/547-0415.

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You've got an important decision to make.
_____ gets the job done when you need it.
_____ comes through in the clutch.
We'll meet all your requirements.
A professional recommendation.
Let _____ plan and manage your _____.
You can turn to us with confidence.

Before sitting down to write promotional copy, you need to assemble some information and your thoughts.

Analyze your product or service. Define who will be reading the piece. You might have to do a little research to get your facts straight. Examine the service or product from the customer's point-of-view. Define the nature of your offering and enumerate all the features that would be of interest to the perspective customer.

"Position" the product or service. How do you want the customer to view your library service? Positioning is critical if you want to develop a successful marketing strategy in a competitive situation. Librarians concerned with how upper management views their information services should pay particular attention to the tone and style of the promotion piece so that it implants the desired image. By the way, this doesn't necessarily mean that you have to produce a somber, or stern promotion piece. Many organizational cultures invite light-hearted approaches to ease stressful business environments.

Assess your audience. Always gear your copy to the needs and tastes of your readers. This may mean that you have to produce more than one promotional piece to target vastly different customer markets. The copy for a promotion piece aimed at support staff and the piece targeting middle management will read differently. Knowing your audience's characteristics will help you position your services in their minds.

Now that you are ready to write the copy that will persuade and motivate readers, here are some thoughts to keep in mind.

Don't lose sight of your primary goal: to sell the library's service and/or product. Don't just write a flat presentation of the facts (remember you are not writing a user's guide.) On the other hand, don't get so wrapped up in being creative that the message gets buried. Write to sell.

Don't fill your copy with empty overstatements. Make sure you avoid trite clichés. Too many words like "extraordinary" and "fabulous" within a brief space will destroy your credibility. You don't want the reader to dismiss your claims. Instead, try to convince the reader that your product is "the best thing since sliced bread".

Be accurate. Be sure you get the facts straight. Don't leave yourself open to claims of false advertising by making statements that can't be substantiated. Above all, be truthful. If you actually deliver research results in 24 hours, it's fine to shout it from the rooftop, but if you take 36 hours to deliver results, then say so. Don't set up false expectations, you'll live to regret them.

Be specific. Don't use vague abstractions or library lingo when you have a chance to create vivid images with simple details. Would you rather ask for a "service that tracks competitors" or a "current awareness service"? Since libraries offer intangible services, your copy should strive to make the service real by stressing various benefits.

Be organized. Your message should progress logically from the headline to the clincher. Don't bury essential information or lead off with trivia. Like an old-fashioned short story, your copy should have a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Write for easy reading. While your style should suit the customers you are targeting, there are certain rules that apply to all copy. Develop a style that flows smoothly and rapidly, one that's clear, uncluttered, involving, and persuasive. Avoid long, complex, and compound sentence structures. Affect a crisp but

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Profile

Jim Shelar, Director of the Arnold and Porter Law Library in Washington, D.C., submitted a great idea to share with *Marketing Treasures* readers.

For some time Jim wanted each of his staff members to have "From the Desk Of" slips so that they could personalize their response to requests. The problem was that to have pads of paper custom printed proved to be too expensive, especially if someone left the staff.



Jim and his secretary put their heads together and came up with a relatively inexpensive solution to the problem. They decided to use the same four-to-a-page perforated paper they use for routing periodicals on the library's Datatrek check-in system. Using WordPerfect,

some downloadable fonts, and an HP Laser printer, they printed multiple copies of the slips on the laser, and then photocopied their library logo onto the bottom of the slips. Now they make custom slips for everyone, they change the paper at will, and alter the information whenever they want — all at a fraction of the cost of pre-printed pads and without the worry of wasting paper.

Jim's source for the perforated paper is Moore Business Forms & Systems Division, Niagra Falls, NY 14302. 1,000 sheets cost approximately \$77.50, which means they can produce a sheet of four slips for 7.75 cents, making each slip approximately two cents a piece. Not a bad deal.

Thanks for the great idea, Jim!

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friendly tone. Communicate. Read your copy out loud and listen to how it sounds.

Don't offend. Humor is a controversial issue among copywriters and advertising people. Humor can be effective if it suits the subject or situation. Sarcasm, cynicism, and other extreme forms of individuality are not likely to meet with mass approval. When in doubt, get feedback from objective and honest individuals.

Revise and edit. Cut out all the dead wood; every word should pull its weight. Be your own critic. If you have access to an editor, let them look it over for syntax, spelling, and punctuation.

Remember, the purpose of your library brochure is to sell the benefits of the information resources you work hard to develop and manage. Why not grab the reader and "knock their socks off" about your library being the "hottest resource in town", staffed by professionals that have "the right stuff", and information that is "just a short stroll from their office". Let's face it, there's "no compromising on quality" when you deliver information services, so your reader should know "no other information service gives them" the resources of your library.

The November issue of *Marketing Treasures* will feature library annual reports. I'd like to chat with librarians who issue an annual report for their library, as well as to librarians who are interested but don't know where to start. Contact me at 301/647-6708 or fax 301/647-0415. Sample reports are welcome.

We're always looking for ideas to share with *Marketing Treasures* readers. Don't be shy. Send us your samples and ideas today!

Worth Its Weight in Gold

Each day, millions of people commute to work in cars. Add to that number individuals flying to business meetings, and salespeople traveling to customer sites, and you conclude that almost everyone is on the move in one way or another.

Susan Kremer at the Mead Corporate Library in Dayton, Ohio, has discovered a way to help her company take advantage of the traveling schedules of the salesforce with books recorded on audio cassette tapes.

Susan purchases books on cassettes for Mead's staff, primarily such business topics as motivation, sales techniques, and other self-improvement topics. This is a great idea for maintaining visibility with people in the field who typically don't think the library is for them.

There are a number of book tape rental companies in the United States. The largest is Books On Tape in Newport Beach, California. Their catalog lists more than 2,500 titles, with updates adding about 20 titles per month.

Titles that may interest the staff members of your organization include *Getting Organized* by Stephanie Winston, *In Search of Excellence* by Peters and Waterman, *Effective Listening* by Kevin Murphy, and *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie. The company also offers a large collection of fiction and nonfiction titles, including best-selling authors such as Tom Clancy.

Books on audio cassette come in two formats: abridged or full length. Most of the titles in the Books on Tape catalog are full text, but if they are abridged the description will tell you. Most tapes may be rented for an average of \$17.50 per 30-day rental, plus shipping. Some titles are available only for purchase.

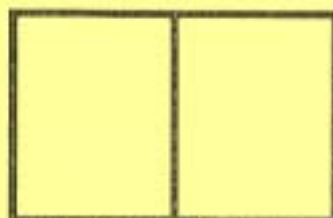
To receive a brochure from Books On Tape, call 800/626-3333. The catalog costs \$5.00, but if you order a tape from the brochure, the catalog is shipped free. The address is Books On Tape, P.O. Box 7900, Newport Beach, CA 92658.

Promotion Gems

One way to save money on printing costs is to "gang" jobs, that is, to print more than one piece or multiple copies of the same piece at the same time. The fewer imprints the press has to make, the less time your job will be on the press, and the lower the cost.

To make effective use of gang printing, you must know the standard sizes paper comes in so that you make accurate measurements, and you must know the sheet size your printer's press can handle. Quick print presses run only pre-cut size sheets (8 1/2 x 11 and 11 x 17), but commercial printers run paper from 17 x 22 to sheets as big as 38 x 50.

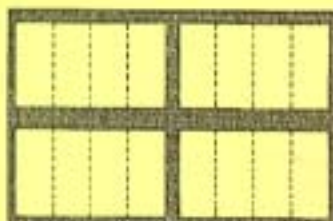
To demonstrate, let's say your printer's press can handle 23 x 25 sheets of paper. The following layouts could be used to gang print a job. The solid lines represent where the print would trim extra paper from the piece, and the dotted lines are folds. The dark area represents the paper that would be trimmed waste.



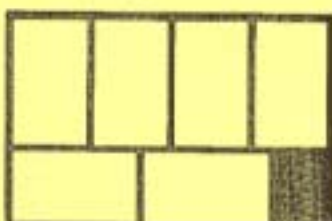
two 17 x 22 pages



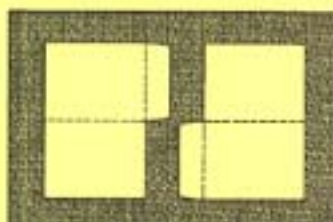
four 8 1/2 x 11 booklets



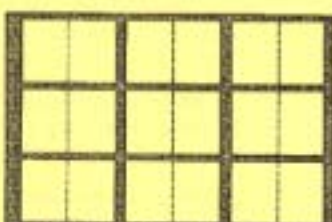
four 8 1/2 x 11 rack brochures



six 8 1/2 x 11 newsletters



five 8 1/2 x 11 pocket folders



nine 4 1/2 x 6 1/2 greeting cards

Sparkling Reviews

Public Relations for Librarians: Getting It All, Saving It All, Sharing It All. Anne Roberts and Susan Blandy, Libraries Unlimited, Englewood, Colorado, 1989. \$23.50 ISBN 0-87287-684-5

This is a great book for librarians working in public, school, or academic settings. The introductory text contains solid information on public relations, the library image, and communications. It effectively sets the stage for the following chapters on planning programs and celebrations, and later chapters on academic, museum, public, and school library PR programs.

Throughout the book are examples of news releases, public service announcements, books reviews, solicitation letters, and flyers. This is an excellent guide for preparing a well-conceived, effective PR program. It's well-written and presents public relations activities in a well-organized manner. Special librarians in legal, medical, corporate or other organizational settings may find it difficult to adapt some of the ideas and examples to their particular situation. However, there is an excellent annotated bibliography at the end of the book, that may be attractive to all librarians just beginning to learn about public relations.

The Crystal Ball

September 17 - 20 "Why Research? What's Its Value?" The American Marketing Association 10th Annual Marketing Research Conference in New York City. Contact: American Marketing Association 312/648-0536.

September 18 - 19 "Managing the Private Law Library: Delivering Information Services". Program will include presentations on law library communication pieces, e.g., annual reports, pathfinders, packaging, etc. In New York City. Contact: Lucy Curo 212/415-8576. Also in Los Angeles on October 16 - 17. Contact: Sharon French 415/546-5538.

September 30 "Impact Your Organization." Led by Kaycee Hale and sponsored by the SLA Mid-South Chapter in Memphis, Tennessee. Contact: Theo Jone-Quarley 901/678-4413.

October 9 - 13 "Applied Methods in Marketing Research." The basics of marketing research taught by six well-known marketing researchers at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Contact: Pam Steton 313/763-1003.

October 12 - 15 "The Communication Crunch" conference of the Great Lakes Chapters of the Special Libraries Association in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Presentations include "Marketing Information For Change", "Communicating Information Services in a Large Organization", and "Improving Staff's Attitude Toward PR". Contact: Patrice Merritt 313/446-2033.

October 13 "Grand Schemes and Nitty-Gritty Details: PR that Works" workshop led by Dawn Heller and Ann Montgomery in Aberdeen, South Dakota. Contact: 312/579-0903.

October 20 "And the Winner Is... How to Win A National Award and Capitalize on It." Presentation by Dawn Heller at the AASL National Conference in Salt Lake City. Contact: 312/231-6156.

October 20 "Making Money: Fees for Information Services". Seminar by Alice Warner sponsored by the SLA Pittsburgh Chapter. In Pittsburgh. Contact: Aida Sterling 412/323-1430.

October 22 - 25 "Service Excellence: Marketing's Impact on Performance." Eighth Annual Services Marketing Conference in San Francisco. Contact: American Marketing Association 312/648-0536.

October 24 - 25 "Developing Marketing Plans". Seminar led by Robert Blattberg of the University of Chicago in Chicago. Contact: Mel Von Smith 312/702-1724.

October 26 - 27 "Questionnaire Design and Use." Workshop sponsored by Anderson, Neuhart, & Associates in Los Angeles, California. Also held on November 9 - 10 in Atlanta, Georgia. Contact: 800/678-5577.

October 30 - 31 Conference of the Council of Federal Libraries in Ottawa, Canada. Conference will be devoted to a variety of marketing topics, a "Swap and Shop", and an open-forum critique of library marketing materials. Speakers will be Robin Inskip, Chris Olson, Robyn Frank, and Steve Abram. Contact: Betty Garland 613/954-8593.

October 31 "Marketing Yourself and Your Library." Presentation by Kaycee Hale at the Arizona State Library Association Annual Conference in Tucson, Arizona. Contact: Betsy Stunz 602/791-5248.

November 1 - 3 "Pricing Strategy and Tactics." Speakers will be Ward Hanson and Thomas Nagle of the University of Chicago. In Chicago. Contact: Mel Von Smith 312/702-1724.

November 2 "Self-Image & Self-Esteem." Led by Kaycee Hale at the Missouri State Teachers Association Annual Conference in St. Louis, Missouri. Contact: Lora Smith 314/442-3127.

November 1 "Marketing Library Services." Seminar led by Jo Ann Bell at the annual meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Chapter Medical Library Association in Rockville, Maryland. Contact: Coeela Durkin 703/691-9100 ext 7940.

November 4 "Grand Schemes and Nitty-Gritty Details: PR that Works." workshop led by Dawn Heller and Ann Montgomery in Tucson, Arizona. Contact: 312/579-0903.

November 5 - 8 "Closing the Service Gap and Guaranteeing Quality Service." First Annual Conference sponsored by the Service Edge Newsletter in Walt Disney World Village, Florida. Contact: 800/328-4329 or 612/333-0471.

November 8 - 10 Creativity to Innovation Institute sponsored by the Association of Research Libraries in New Orleans. Contact: Susan Jurow 202/232-8656.

November 10 "Professional Power." Led by Kaycee Hale at the California Library Association Pre-Conference in Oakland. Contact: Karin Duran 818/247-0429.

November 13 - 16 "Planning & Developing New Products & Markets". Four-day seminar sponsored by American Management Association at the AMA Management Center in Atlanta. Also held December 4 - 7 in Detroit, Michigan. Contact: Harry Salant 518/891-0055.

November 15 "Personal Image & Self-Projection." Led by Kaycee Hale at the California Media & Library Educators Association Pre-Conference in Los Angeles. Contact: Janet Mirami 213/525-8971.

November 28 "Winning Marketing Techniques". Course by Alice Warner sponsored by Central Pennsylvania Chapter in Lancaster. Contact: Elizabeth Laughlin 717/255-6000.