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COPYWRITING TNT! April, 2008

Resources, ideas, and tips for writers and copywriters, business-to-business, high-tech, industrial, Internet, and direct marketing.  
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QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

*"You' ll never make the grade at anything by playing it safe."*  
*-The Twilight Zone*

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\*\*\* OUTMARKET YOUR COMPETITORS—WHAT IS A NEW CUSTOMER WORTH? \*\*\*

To determine how much they can afford to spend to get a new customer, many marketers base that figure on the average size of the first order.

Therefore, if the front-end product or service is \$500, they won't spend anywhere near that to acquire the customer, for fear of operating at break-even or even a loss. If they want to double their money on the promotion, the most they'll spend to make the sale is \$250.

But savvy marketers know that the amount of money you can spend to acquire a new customer should be based on the customer's lifetime value, not just the revenue from the first order.

Lifetime value refers to how much money your customer is likely to spend with you during the period he remains a customer of your business.

For instance, if the average unit of sale is \$500, the average number of purchases per year is two, and the average customer remains a customer for 5 years, the lifetime customer value is  
 $\$500 \times 2 \times 5 = \$5,000$ .

Based on the average lifetime value, you can see where it would in fact be worth spending \$500 to acquire a new customer.

The business owner who understands lifetime customer value as it relates to customer acquisition has a tremendous advantage: He is willing to spend more to acquire new business, because he knows its true value.

Example: A company selling books to corporate librarians asks you to devise a marketing campaign to get new corporate accounts to start ordering books from them.

Ask the owner what he would be willing to spend to get a new account. He says about \$300.

Forget advertising. Just advise him to open up an account for every company he wants as a customer - and put \$300 in it!

Send each prospect a personal letter telling them they already have an account with you - and that it contains \$300 they can use at any time this year.

So instead of a sales or marketing campaign, your client gives the money he would have spent to generate leads directly to his key prospects, so they could try the service at no cost.

Today online trading services use the same tactic. They send you a letter telling you they have opened an account for you with \$75 or so in it. You get the money when you do your first trade.

Need to stimulate business? Calculate lifetime customer value, decide what percentage of that amount you want to spend on acquiring new customers (10% is a common figure), and basically just give potential customers the money in exchange for trying your product or service.

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\*\*\* AUTHOR INTERVIEW SERIES A SUCCESS \*\*\*

Back in March, I launched series of author interviews on my blog, [www.travisheermann.com/blog](http://www.travisheermann.com/blog) . In the last month or so, I have already interviewed some of the most renowned genre fiction authors working today, with more ahead in the coming months. Some of the interviews I'm most proud of are those with Joe Lansdale, Melinda Snodgrass, and Nalini Singh, all of them award-winning, best-selling authors of horror, science-fiction, and romance, respectively.

The interviews focus on writing as a life, and a career, and offer insights into how these pros do it.

In coming weeks, I'll be speaking with Jack Ketchum, Ramsey Campbell, Robert Reed, and Kevin J. Anderson. So look for a new author interview every Friday for the foreseeable future.

Feel free to send me suggestions for authors you'd like to see, and I'll see what I can do.

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\*\*\* IF YOU'RE A COPYWRITER, YOU NEED TO READ THIS \*\*\*

Thirty years ago, freelance copywriting was a wide open market. But today, thanks to the efforts of copywriting pioneers like Bob Bly and Michael Masterson, the marketplace has grown a bit crowded. A simple Google search brings up dozens and dozens of freelancers, many of them willing to work for peanuts.

In this overcrowded market, you need more than just copywriting ability to make it as a freelance copywriter.

You also need to know how to get clients!

And not just any clients. But clients who understand how valuable good copywriting is, appreciate your skills, and are willing to pay a fair price for it. And if you've ever used websites like Elance.com and Guru.com, you know how hard it is to find this kind of client in online markets.

If you're truly serious about increasing your client base with quality opportunities, you need to click this link and find out how the big boys and girls get the clients who pay thousands of dollars to write a single letter. A few minutes of your time could change your writing career.

<http://www.ctcpublishing.net/cmd.php?Clk=2236893>

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\*\*\* SUCCESS WITHOUT STRESS \*\*\*

What follows is not directly related to marketing, writing, and the other topics I typically cover in this newsletter - and it is easy to dismiss advice like this as simplistic or trivial.

But when copywriter Bob Bly e-mailed this list to me, I read it carefully - and found it to be deceptively profound and effective.

Here are 10 tips for living less stressfully, from "Loving and Leaving the Good Life" by Helen Nearing:

1. Do the best you can, whatever arises.
2. Be at peace with yourself.
3. Find a job you enjoy.
4. Live in simple conditions; get rid of clutter.
5. Contact nature every day; find the earth under your feet.
6. Take physical exercise.
7. Don't worry; live one day at a time.
8. Share something every day with someone else; help someone else somehow.
9. Take time to wonder at the world and at life; see some humor in life where you can.
10. Be kind.

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\*\*\* DICK BENSON'S 10 SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL DIRECT MAIL \*\*\*

1. A two-time buyer is twice as likely to buy as a one-time buyer.
2. The addition of installment payments for an item over \$15 will increase results by 15%.
3. "FREE" is a magic word.
4. Memberships renew better than plain subscriptions by 10% or more.
5. The same product sold at difference prices will result in the same net income per thousand mailed.
6. Dollar for dollar, premiums are better incentives than cash discounts.
7. A follow-up mailing dropped two weeks after the first mailing will pull 50% of the original response.
8. "Department store" pricing always pays except for membership offers.
9. You can never sell two things at once.
10. Two premiums are frequently better than one.

Source: Dick Benson, "Secrets of Successful Direct Mail"  
(NTC Business Books, 1992)

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\*\*\* HOW TO DOUBLE OR TRIPLE YOUR FREELANCE INCOME THIS YEAR \*\*\*

If you want to be a freelance writer someday, there is a simple secret that could double or triple your productivity this year. Here it is: the more you write, the more saleable writing you produce. So, if your writing is up to snuff, the more money you will make! Additionally, the more you write, the better at it you become, just like any skill.

But if you're like me, sometimes writing is like pulling teeth. You can stare at the blank screen until your forehead bleeds. Then I found out that there were techniques for speed-writing that can kick your productivity into overdrive.

Master Copywriter Bob Bly has a newly updated program devoted to teaching you the secrets of how to be *fast* writer. You won't have to spend hours at the computer waiting for inspiration to strike.

In *The Super-Productive Writer*, Bob shares his best writer's productivity tips and tactics with you -- so you too can make more money writing. If you want to boost your productivity, it's worth a couple minutes of your time to check out this program.

<http://www.ctcpublishing.net/cmd.php?Clk=2167288>

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\*\*\* FILLING SEATS AT YOUR PROMOTIONAL SEMINARS \*\*\*

Do you market your product and service using seminars?

According to Paul Karasik, one of the most effective ways to fill seats at a seminar is with newspaper advertising. If you decide to run an advertisement, Paul advises you to follow these guidelines:

1. Run your ad on Sundays and Tuesdays, the best days to advertise.
2. Avoid advertising on Friday.
3. Do not advertise the day the grocery ads appear.
4. To save money, advertise in local editions of big newspapers.
5. Always use a headline in your ad to attract attention.
6. Stress the benefits of the seminar.
7. Make the copy simple and easy to read.
8. Keep your sentences and paragraphs short.
9. Use adequate white space.
10. Include your photo.
11. Employ graphics when possible.
12. Mention anything free, like refreshments or workbooks.
13. Business and finance sections work the best.
14. The front of the section is best.
15. The best page location is the upper right.
16. Multiple exposures increase your response rates.
17. Larger ads get a better response.
18. Include a strong call to action.
19. Identify yourself with a logo.
20. Use a toll free number for registrations.

Source: The Karasik Minute, 5/1/06.

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\*\*\*8 SIMPLE RULES FOR REPEAT SALES\*\*\*

On his blog, sales guru Mike Siger gives the following tips for generating repeat sales from your customers:

1. Give them what they asked for - close doesn't count, exact does - not once, but every time.
2. Deliver quality - don't bother delivering inferior product.
3. Don't oversell them - convincing them to take a chance on selling two year's worth of product in one year's time is the fast lane to being a onetime supplier.
4. Become a valued team member - go above and beyond or don't go at all.
5. Keep them informed - let them know about delays, pricing issues, and potential problems well in advance of the rumor mongers (your competition).
6. Tell the truth - don't become overly enthusiastic and stretch the truth, even if your honesty costs you the sale.
7. Show appreciation for past sales - e.g., nice golf courses, 2-hour lunches, and leisurely steak dinners.
8. Show interest - either you invest your time thinking about their company and how you can help them - or your competitor will.

Source: <http://simpleeconomics.com>

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\*\*\* TELL ME YOUR THOUGHTS \*\*\*

I welcome any feedback from my readers, positive, negative, or in-between. What kinds of articles would you like to see more of? Got something to say?

Throw me some compelling comments, or stories of your own. Maybe they'll appear in future issues.

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A 60-SECOND COMMERCIAL FROM THE WRITE LINE:

Travis is available for copywriting of direct mail packages, sales letters, brochures, ads, e-mail marketing campaigns, PR materials, and Web pages. We recommend you call or e-mail for a FREE copy of our updated Write Line Information Kit. Just let us know your industry and the type of copy you're interested in seeing (ads, mailings, etc.), and if Travis is available to take your assignment, we'll tailor a package of recent samples to fit your requirements.

Call Travis at 402-830-0913 or e-mail [travis@thewriteline.biz](mailto:travis@thewriteline.biz)

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