

Jo Han Mok's

Speed Listbuilding

**"List Building Strategies On
Steroids!"**

#1 International Bestselling Author of The E-code

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Speed Listbuilding

There are as many ways to drive traffic to your website as there are trees in the forest. Now, qualified traffic, well that's a different story. You don't want to spend good money or time getting petrified wood collectors to your fly fishing site. You want diehard fly fishers to come, eager to read your content and subscribe to your list.

But even getting highly qualified visitors to your site doesn't have to be time-consuming or cost a fortune. It all depends on how you *leverage* your resources. Your articles. Your blog posts. Your posts on discussion forums. Cheap or free ways to get offline traffic to your site, too.

In fact, in this very special report, I discuss some of my favorite ways to get interested visitors to my sites, where they opt in to my lists and subscribe to my ezines and mini-courses. I'll also share some of my secrets to getting those visitors to opt in to your list once they arrive at your site.

Of course the ultimate goal is to make a profit. But before that happens, you need to develop a relationship with your prospects. You want to get to know them. And you want them to get to know you and what you have to offer.

This isn't a report about the importance of building your list. I'm assuming you already know what a highly responsive list means to you and your business.

Rather, these methods are the ones that cost me the least and deliver the best results. I've built several lists from scratch using nearly all of these methods in some form or another. The ones I haven't tried yet were passed along to me by friends and colleagues, who *have* used them to build their lists and churn some nice tidy profits.

The four primary methods I use and recommend are: writing and syndicating articles, leveraging discussion forum posts, joint ventures, and offline marketing. They have proven their worth to me many times over, and I highly recommend you at least try them.

In fact, no matter how many things you've tried in the past, and no matter how successful you are today, I can't see you walking away without getting at least one or two new gems to test from this concise, but meaty report.

So with that, let's get started with one of the best ways to get responsive visitors to your website: writing and publishing articles.

Writing and Publishing Articles

It's fairly well-known that one of the better ways for building a list or generating website traffic is by writing articles. But just as important as writing the articles is where they are distributed and used. How they are promoted. You're going to find that that's going to be the key to getting traffic to your site and building your list. Articles can be submitted to directories, posted on your blog, on your website, on forums, wherever you have an opportunity to reach people that may be interested in your niche.

So you want your articles to be as distributed as widely as possible all over the Internet and in the offline world wherever possible. For example, here some sites where you can submit your articles, and where other newsletter authors and publishers will come to get content for other publications:

- <http://www.articledashboard.com>
- <http://www.articlealley.com>
- <http://www.goarticles.com>
- <http://www.articlecity.com>
- <http://ezinearticles.com>
- <http://www.ideamarketers.com>
- <http://www.marketing-seek.com>

By letting others publish your articles in their ezines, your website can gain even greater exposure. Nothing terribly new about that.

Where most people fail is how they attempt to get readers of their articles to take action. That is, getting them to both:

1) Visit your website

and...

2) Get them to opt in to your list

It takes some planning and work on your part to make this desired result happen.

- ✓ Writing your article takes time and effort.
- ✓ Getting someone to publish your article in their ezine takes more effort.
- ✓ Getting people to read your published article takes even more effort.
- ✓ It takes additional effort to get people to visit your website after reading the article.
- ✓ And finally, it takes effort on top of that to get your website visitors to opt in to your list.

Is it any wonder most people aren't as successful as they could be? There are many places along the way for missed opportunities, where potential subscribers will slip through the cracks.

Not only that, but you're competing with tons of other marketers who are trying to do the same thing. The odds are definitely stacked against you.

But in this report, I'll show you some techniques to significantly improve your odds, techniques that 95 percent of all article authors aren't using. Do you think this will give you an edge? It will...if you *use* these techniques and actually put them to the test.

First, let me talk about some of the basics of writing your article. If you go to article directories, you'll find that too many of the articles you see there don't even incorporate these basic response-boosting tactics.

The title of your article is key, so choose it wisely. Your article title is your headline for your article. And in a sales letter, the purpose of your headline is to get your letter read, right? Well, in this case, the purpose of your title is to get your article read. You'll find that many of the same principles of writing headlines apply to choosing your title. *You want people to stop what they're doing and read your article right then and there.*

That means titles that are benefit-driven will outperform those that aren't. Your readers want to know what's in it for them. So you need to craft your title accordingly. This is no time to be vague or clever.

And before you choose your title, you'll need to know a bit about your target audience. Their wants, desires, needs. Their problems. What's on their minds. In short, you need to fit the message of the article, and your title in particular, to what your target market wants. And by target market, I mean those who you ultimately want to come to your website and opt in to your list. So the more targeted the message, the better.

Your title should...

- ✓ Address something desirable
- ✓ Be as specific as possible
- ✓ Convey a sense of urgency
- ✓ Make a promise
- ✓ Be intriguing

The more of these points you include in your title, the better you can generally expect your readership to be.

Here are some examples:

The Top X Ways To _____

The Top 5 Ways To Lose 5 Pounds in a Week

The Top 10 Ways To Knock 5 Strokes Off Your Next Round of Golf

How To _____ In _____

How To Double Your Profits In 30 Days

How To Get Out of Debt In 3 Simple Steps

How To _____...Even If _____

How To Make the Lottery Pay Off...Even If You Never Invest a Dime

How To Turn Your Hobbies Into Cash...Even If You've Never Sold Anything

The Quick and Easy Formula for _____

The Quick and Easy Formula for Finding That Special Someone

The Quick and Easy Formula for Selling Your Home

_____ Little Known Tips for _____

7 Little Known Tips for Training Your Labrador

3 Little Known Tips for Roughing It in the Wilderness

The _____ Hidden Costs of _____

The 10 Hidden Costs of Buying Your New Home

The Sneaky Hidden Costs of Renting a Car on Your Next Vacation

_____ : The Proven _____

Direct Mail: The Proven Way to Reactivate Former Customers

A.I.D.A.: The Proven Formula For Sales Conversions

One final word about titles: Remember that when someone is browsing an article directory, they are seeing your article title alongside tons of others. It's kind of like the Yellow Pages. The Yellow Pages are one of the most competitive places to advertise. Why? Because your prospects see your ads right alongside your competitors'. You definitely NEED to stand out from the clutter. Your title should be about your prospect's needs, wants, and desires. *It should be about the person reading the article, not the article itself.*

This becomes even more critical when a publisher looking for content is browsing

an article directory. After all, which do you think will bring you more exposure: a reader browsing articles or a publisher with a 100,000-person subscriber list who publishes *your* article?

Your first paragraph will keep them reading—or not. After your title, your opening paragraph guides them into the main body of your article, so you'll want it to be interesting, and an extension of your title.

Some good ways to keep that interest going are to:

- ✓ Present a problem
- ✓ Set the stage with a story, anecdote, or quote
- ✓ Ask a question
- ✓ Reveal an interesting or startling fact
- ✓ Present an overview
- ✓ Paint an emotional picture

Use proven formulas. Just like a sales letter, proven formulas boost readership and response in articles too.

- ✓ **Problem-Agitate-Solution** – You present a problem, then agitate it further. Finally the solution is hinted at towards the end of the article (with an incentive for them to go to your website to get the full picture).
- ✓ **Before and After** – I was fat, now I'm thin. I was poor, now I'm rich. I was a hack, now I'm a scratch golfer.
- ✓ **Useful, but Incomplete** – Give just enough information to entice them, but leave them wanting more (which your website will provide).
- ✓ **Frequently asked questions** – Include some great ones, but leave some out to be placed on your website. Be sure to let them know in your resource box at the end of the article that there are more at your site.
- ✓ **Share a specific set of points.**
 - 5 Steps to Making a Fortune on eBay
 - How to Speed Up Your Metabolism in 3 Easy Steps
 - 10 Ways to Write Better Ads
 - 3 Keys to a Greener Lawn
 - 7 Quick Tips for Self-Defense

Position yourself as the expert, but don't be condescending. This is a given, but it's worth mentioning. Yes, you want to be seen as an authority on the subject, but you don't want to come across as arrogant or a "know-it-all." Remember these are real people reading your article. If you offend them, you've

lost them. Of course the same can be said for off-color or offensive remarks. When in doubt, leave it out.

Your resource box should present itself as the next logical step. The article should transition nicely right into the resource box. You want them to go to your website, so your resource box should hint at more information to be found on the topic.

Give them an “ethical bribe.” Your resource box should also give a no-brainer offer. An “ethical bribe” designed to entice them. Just like you need a premium to get them to opt in to your list, you also need a premium of sorts to get them to your website in the first place.

Leverage your article wherever possible. In short, you want that article reused as much as possible all over the Internet (and offline as well).

- ✓ Post it in the article directories.
- ✓ Post it on all relevant forums.
- ✓ Submit it to search engines.
- ✓ Post it on your blog.
- ✓ Post it on your website.
- ✓ Encourage others to publish it in their ezines.
- ✓ Include your article in viral ebooks to be passed around the web.
- ✓ Offer your article as a premium report for other people’s products. Expand on the article, if necessary, to make it a content-packed report.
- ✓ Offer it for others to use on their content sites (e.g. Adwords), membership sites, as part of a mini-course, anywhere your target market will be exposed to it.
- ✓ Offer it to your affiliates.

Give your best tip at the end of the article and your second best tip at the start – In a sales letter, we’d usually start off with our strongest benefit or point and work our way down to the lesser benefits from there. In an article, you often want that big bang at the end, just before they’re led to your resource box. Also your last tip can carry the greatest weight if you lead up to it, by making all other tips depending on the final one, and by foreshadowing the final tip to come.

Then your resource box should offer something related to your final point. All they have to do is head over to your website.

Design your resource box like you would a headline – Similar to the effort you must put into your article title and the headline on your squeeze page, your resource box needs to contain a sense of urgency. It must tap anticipation, desire, curiosity, and/or other emotional hot buttons. It must have a call to action. And like your title, where the goal is to have your article read, the goal with your resource box is to get them to go to your website. Now, not tomorrow or next week.

And much like there should be congruency between a Google Adwords ad and the landing page headline, so must your resource box and headline on your squeeze page match. Think about it. If your resource box looked like the following:

About the Author

Jane Doe is a certified massage therapist, author, speaker and consultant. Watch her conduct her stress reduction workshop each month on video. Jane is giving free access to this private site, but only while charter memberships last. Join today at <http://JaneDoeMassage.com>.

...your headline your squeeze page should tie into that offer. Maybe:

**“Jump to the Head of the Line and Get FREE Access
To Jane Doe’s Private Membership Forum...Before
All Charter Memberships are Gone”**

Or something like that. I just made that up, but you get the idea. Here’s another example of a resource box with a good call to action:

John Smith is the author of the free 36-page report, “How to Turn Your Hobby into Your Own Personal ATM Machine.” Head over to <http://www.whatever.com> for your free copy while supplies last.

Remember, everything in your article is designed to get them to go to your site. And everything at your site is designed to get them to subscribe to your list. So you really need two calls to action here—two incentives: one to get them to go to your website, and another one to get them to subscribe.

Let’s look at another great way to get qualified traffic to your squeeze page: posting to forums.

Posting to Forums

Posting to discussions is a very fast and powerful way you can start expanding your list of subscribers in as little as *5 minutes*.

You can find forums about your niche very easily. Just Google the following:

+“your niche” +forum

or

+“your niche” +discussion board

Just be sure to check the posting guidelines for each forum before you post. The techniques I’m presenting here are generally acceptable on most forums, but you need to know what’s allowed and what’s not, especially when it comes to solicitations.

Here are some quick and easy ways to get pre-qualified traffic flowing your way:

Ask for suggestions or advice. Let’s say you’ve written an article on your site entitled “15 Ways to Put the Romance Back in a Relationship.” You could make a post asking folks to check out the article and see if you missed anything. Or you can ask for additional points to add to your article. Of course you’ll have your opt in box at the end of the article with a compelling offer.

Let’s say you’ve written an article on losing weight quickly. You could post a message like this: “If you had to lose 5 pounds in 2 weeks for a wedding, how would you do it?”

It’s a great way to get both input and exposure for your article. You may also get other publishers who are interesting in your content for their ezines, leveraging that content even more.

Ask for a critique. If you don’t mind getting honest feedback, many people will end up subscribing to your list. It’s a more indirect and acceptable way to ask people to check out your site without blatant advertising. Plus, the feedback they give you may help to make your squeeze page even more compelling. Ask them if it would persuade them to give it a try, assuming they were in your target market (of course you already know they are by the forum you selected). And if they say no, ask them why. You can get valuable information on what they want (and don’t want) this way.

There are two types of forums where you should ask for critiques: the niche forum itself and a marketing forum. You’ll likely get more sign-ups from the niche

forum, and good advice to test out from the marketing forum (although you'll get some opt ins there as well).

Ask your market what they want. It's one of the best ways to develop products and services they'll buy *and* give you ideas for articles, autoresponder content, your blog posts, whatever you need.

The way you would use this technique to get them to subscribe is to post something like, "what's your biggest question about building a web page?" Or "what's the single most important thing you'd like to know about brewing your own beer?"

Let them know you've already answered 7 questions (your 7 step mini-course loaded in your autoresponder), for example. Then they'll be more likely to sign-up. Make sure you point out that you'll add to your mini-course with the answers to the questions they've provided, and that they'll get answers to the existing questions in your mini-course PLUS the new ones when they subscribe. Everybody wins!

Offer a checklist or video tutorial. If someone asks how to research a niche market, give them a checklist of steps they can take. Or make a Camtasia tutorial video showing them how. Now that you've got them to your site, you'll want to "make them an offer they can't refuse."

Offer a list of resources. In addition to checklists, resource lists with website URLs make a great site for them to bookmark! Make sure you supply more than just links. Make it a huge info-page of information. A collection of resources, links to everything you have—articles, video, audio, your blog, other useful sites, tools, you name it.

This technique tends to work best when you set up a separate domain for the site. Make it a portal. You want people to come back again and again, so keep it fresh with content and up to date.

Solve a problem or give some help. If someone asks for help or asks a question, offer your experience and try to help them. But to maximize your odds of getting both the asker of the question and everyone else who reads the post to subscribe to your list, try to phrase your answer in one of the following two ways:

- 1) Give them tips, techniques, shortcuts, secrets, anything that offers both promise of exclusive information *and* fast results. A shortcut to success.
- 2) Whenever possible, supply them with specific results. Think about it. When you want to learn how to bowl a perfect game, you go to someone who has *bowled a perfect game*. When you want to know how to sing with a perfect pitch, you seek out someone who's already mastered that skill. If

you want to lose 10 pounds, it carries more weight (no pun intended) if they person guiding you has *actually lost 10 pounds*. Do you see where I'm going with this?

And by helping them, maybe—just maybe—they'll click on he link in your signature to check out your website. If you direct them to a blog post or article you wrote to answer their question, they'll be even more likely to investigate.

In fact, here's a sneaky but completely ethical way to virtually guarantee you get an onslaught of new subscribers:

- 1) Find a hot topic. In most forums you should be able to determine how many times a forum had been read and/or how many posts it contains. You want to find one that's on fire. If it involves a highly emotional or controversial subject, so much the better, as these tend to grow very quickly and get read often.
- 2) Write an article about the subject being discussed. You know the topic is of interest to them or it wouldn't be so hot. In short, you are entering the conversation already in their minds. Your article will be current to the discussion, relevant to what's being discussed, and highly desired due to the hot nature of the topic. Your article should offer a solution if a problem is being discussed, a tutorial, a case study, a list of tips or shortcuts, whatever this audience is looking for (they're telling you right there in their posts).
- 3) If the forum allows it (most do), give it a compelling subject line when you post. What I mean is don't accept the default original subject already being passed from post to post within that thread. You want your subject to be intriguing and compelling, just like your headlines and article titles, but you may want to hint at being controversial as well. If it's a hotly discussed topic, people will read your post if they think it's "gonna be good." Above all, don't be boring.

Here are some quick examples on how you could begin your title with a "controversial edge:"

- I don't think so...
- I think you have it backwards...
- This is the best one I've seen...
- Umm...no...
- What I did was...
- That's good, but this is easier...
- Wait a minute...
- Why do that, when...
- Actually...
- Let me see if I got this straight...
- You can't go wrong with...

- What about....plus it's free!

4) Share a part of your article, and direct them back to your article for the rest, where you'll have an opt in box with a premium if they sign up. I suggest testing a mini-course or archive of articles relating to that topic if they subscribe (but call it something else).

Give them part of your article. Rather than posting your article in its entirety, give them the first part and redirect them to your blog or website to read the rest. Obviously your title and lead must be strong, and you want to stop at a point that leaves them hanging.

Use an 800 Pound Gorilla and Search-Friendly Subjects. Here's a tip I picked up on Michel Fortin's forum. By posting your articles or content on "heavyweight" sites like Michel's, you'll get higher rankings in organic search engine searches. It's a no-brainer, but it's often not understood or used as well as it should.

To see an example of what I mean, check out this forum posting:
<http://www.copywritersboard.com/off-topic-discussion/3437-dont-stoopid.html>

Give 'em your best tip and leave them wanting more. Let's say you're browsing a blues guitar forum, and you see lot of discussion about learning to play guitar licks like Stevie Ray Vaughn. You put together a tutorial with tablature entitled, "*9 Stevie Ray Riffs You Can Learn to Play in an Hour.*" In your posted reply, you give them your best riff right there to show you've got the goods. Then send them to your tutorial for the other 8 riffs.

Or perhaps you're looking through a smoking cessation forum. Obviously these folks want to know the best ways to quit smoking. So after you write an article about it, you come back and announce "here are the exact steps I took to quit smoking...and I've been smoke-free for a year now." Remember, people would rather learn from someone who has already done it. If you can be that person, you'll have a steady stream of prospects following you back to your site wanting more. It just doesn't get any easier than this.

Include your list offer as a resource. When you find a hot discussion that lends itself well to a list of resources for that topic, by all means supply them with some. Just make sure YOU are included among those resources. For example, if you have a mini-course entitled, "*7 Ways to Stop Insomnia,*" you could write about "*Top 10 Free Insomnia Resources.*" And of course you list your mini-course as one of the free resources.

And don't forget to leverage everything. Use your content for articles, blog posts, forum posts, a free PDF report, wherever you can.

Because your article contains FREE resources, it's likely that other ezine list owners will publish it. And as an extra incentive to get other list owners to publish it, you can allow them to add one of their own resources into your article. In fact, you can even offer the content with private label rights with the only condition being that your resource stays intact as is. That is, they can change anything else they want and even claim authorship, but your resource stays. And that means even more exposure for you.

Joint Ventures

Joint ventures (JVs) are one of the best ways to lure new leads and customers. By partnering with other businesses whose customers are part of your market, you have an additional profit center of incremental income. For example, an attorney can refer his clients to an accountant, and the accountant in turn refers clients to the attorney. It's a win/win situation, because many times a new business will need both an attorney and an accountant. Depending on which one they approach first (the lawyer or accountant), they'll be referred to the other.

JVs can go much further than this simple arrangement, however. They can be very complex, and there can be 3-way deals going on. The key to making these deals work is to make sure that you let a prospective JV partner know from the start that:

- You've discovered an additional profit center for them that they are probably unaware of (offer projected profits, if possible).
- The additional profit center will not detract in any way from their current income stream.
- The additional profit center will not incur any additional costs or labor on their part to implement.
- The additional profit center will not incur any risk whatsoever on their part.
- You will perform all of the leg work to set it up.
- They can stop at any time for any reason.

One Tip: If you try to set up a JV with a business, and they already have a deal in place with someone else, you can take that information to their competitor and say "Your biggest competitor is already doing this." And if your partner ever decides to stop the JV deal, you can go to their competitors and say the same thing (Hint: if you let them know you are going to do that, they may reconsider). Never feel that you have to partner with one specific business exclusively. Ideally you should have JV deals going on all over the place.

You can also do JVs between your business and another, or you can broker JVs between two different businesses and benefit in the middle.

Finding JV Partners

If you know of a company that sells a complementary but not competitive product or service as yours, you should subscribe to their list and watch their content sent to you over time. That will give you a feel for their marketing style and the types of affiliates/joint ventures they promote.

One way to find such potential alliance partners is via the good “old fashioned” search engines. Only in this case, you’re going to drill down a bit deeper.

Google is one of the best search engines to use when locating JV partners, because of the tools available at your disposal when searching.

The trick is to know what to search for and to use Google’s research tools correctly. Here are some of my favorite ways.

1) Use the *inurl* search.

You can go to Google and type in: *inurl:[keyword]* to find web addresses that contain your keyword in the full web address name itself (including parts that *aren’t* part of the root domain name).

For example, typing *inurl:mortgage* might give me:

- <http://http://www.mortgage.com>
- <http://www.mortgage-calc.com>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mortgage>
- <http://hometown.aol.com/aaamortg/mortgage.html>
- <http://www.mortgage-express.co.uk>

...and much more.

Note that they all contain the word “mortgage” in the domain name, subdomain name or a file or directory name within the domain.

2) Use the *allinurl* search.

Similar to the *inurl* search, the *allinurl* search allows you to type in *allinurl:[keyword phrase]* and return all addresses that contain that phrase in the domain name, subdomain name or a file or directory name within the domain.

For example, typing *allinurl:weight loss* might return:

- <http://www.weight-loss-institute.com>
- <http://www.technorati.com/tags/weight+loss>
- <http://www.drugs.com/weight-loss.html>
- <http://weight-loss.one-pharmacy.com>
- <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/weight-loss/WT99999>

...for starters.

You'll be able to narrow your focus even more.

3) Use the *intitle:[keyword]* and *allintitle:[keyword phrase]*

Similar to *inurl* and *allinurl*, this search returns the keyword or keyword phrase in the title of the web page.

For example, *intitle:exercise* might return (the bolded text is my addition):

[American Council On **Exercise**](http://www.acefitness.org)
(<http://www.acefitness.org>)

[**Exercise**: A Healthy Habit to Start and Keep -- familydoctor.org](http://familydoctor.org/059.xml)
(<http://familydoctor.org/059.xml>)

[MedlinePlus: **Exercise** and Physical Fitness](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/exerciseandphysicalfitness.html)
(<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/exerciseandphysicalfitness.html>)

Notice the keyword *exercise* appears in each of the titles, but may or may not appear in the URLs.

And *allintitle:corporate law* might return:

[**Corporate Law** - Guide to Corporate and Business Law](http://www.hg.org/corp.html)
(<http://www.hg.org/corp.html>)

[Delaware **Corporate Law** Clearinghouse - Chancery Court, Court of ...](http://corporate-law.widener.edu)
(<http://corporate-law.widener.edu>)

[Gulf **Law**: **Corporate** Laws in Arab Middle East, Company **Law** Guide ...](http://gulf-law.com)
(<http://gulf-law.com>)

[Company **law** databases and **corporate** regulatory issues in India](http://www.companylawonline.com)
(<http://www.companylawonline.com>)

Look at the last two above. Notice how Google didn't only return web pages with the exact phrase "*corporate law*". It returned those that had ALL of the words in the phrase in its title, in any order.

If you want only the exact phrase returned, place double quotes around the keyword phrase, like this: *allintitle:"corporate law"*

Now let's look at some ways you can use both online and offline JVs to grow your list.

JV your list building: large list. If you have a large list, one of the easiest ways to build it even further is to do a cross mailing. That is, you partner with another large list owner in your target market. You send out his message to your list, he sends out your message to his list. Simple. Just remember, once your prospects or customers are on another list that sells to them, there is increased message clutter. That is, they are now being pitched by your JV partner AND you. It's a tradeoff you need to consider.

JV your list building: small list. Ok, if your existing list isn't large enough to warrant a cross JV mailing as described above, here's a clever way to build your list up quickly. I've done this, but not to the extent I should. I've got more deals like this in the works. Here's how it works:

Let's say your list is on the small side. "John Smith" has a huge list. You want to JV with him, but a cross swap isn't going to persuade him. You need to be the middleperson between John Smith and another large list owner.

"Jane Doe" is another huge list owner. What if you can put John Smith and Jane Doe together to do a cross mailing, and you get exposure as well. Instead of a cut of profits, you agree to get a slice of the list. In other words, perhaps in order to get onto Jane's list from John's, they have to come through you first. Or, you could have John mail his list with the agreement that whatever prospects Jane gets, she'll share with you. It's a win/win/win situation, because all of you are gaining new prospects on your lists.

John gets some of Jane's list.

Jane gets some of John's list.

You get some of Jane's list. Or, ideally, you get some of both lists. You are the dealmaker. It wouldn't have happened without you, so depending on the deal you make, why shouldn't you get access to both lists?

Another way to JV your list building: small list. Your list is your greatest asset, right? But if you only have 1,000 names where 50,000 or 100,000 is the norm (more is better, right?), then why not JV a list exchange. Bear with me. It's true that you may not have much to offer to the list owner of 100,000+ names, when you only have 1,000. But it can be done.

One way to do this? Ok, let's pretend that I convince a speaker to do a teleseminar with me that I know at least 2 or 3 other 100k+ list size owners would love to tell their subscribers about. Let's couple that with the fact that these list owners want to build their lists even more. And you do too. You could make a deal with some of these list owners that whoever opts in to your teleseminar, you'll do a solo mailing of a product of their choice to the entire list if they promote the call. Remember they're delivering a message to their list that their list would be interested in, and they're interested in getting the names of the other list owners that will opt-in. So you act as the middle-person and make all sides happy, while greatly adding to the size of your list.

I've personally done this, and I've got some big promotions on the way that will grow my list even further. All you need to do is to contact these people and let them know how they benefit from the arrangement.

Will everyone welcome the deal? No. But there are plenty who will. And everyone wins (those are the best kinds of deals, by the way). This is one of those ideas that will work just as good online as they do offline.

Seek out other businesses that cater to your market. I used the lawyer and accountant example in the introduction to this JV section. A realtor may JV with moving companies, custom framers, carpet cleaners, pest control services, lawn care companies, painters, electricians, plumbers, the list goes on. Just be sure to JV with those businesses who have products and/or services your customers may need (i.e. a realtor JVing with a video game company doesn't make much sense).

Make a list of businesses who want and need a constant flow of leads: lawyers, doctors, dentists, realtors, home remodeling services, carpet cleaners, pest control services, etc. Broker deals between them where there is a fit to generate leads.

JV mailings. For generating leads where it's not cost-effective, direct mail can be prohibitively expensive. That's why card decks and Value-Paks are so popular. But aside from those types of mailings, you can always partner with a non-competitor (or two or three) that offer a complementary or similar offer with the same target market as yours. By splitting the cost of the mailing, you still get your message out, but at a much-reduced cost.

JV inserts/flyers/circulars. Similar to JV mailings, you could arrange to have your flyer, insert, or circular inserted into another publication already being mailed. This "hitching a ride" approach works best when your audience is targeted, although newspaper inserts are popular with local bricks and mortar businesses. The JV part comes into play when you pay so much per lead or a percentage of all sales resulting from the arrangement. Depending on your price structure, you can pay a percentage of the first sale only, or a tiered approach

where a smaller percentage is paid for all first year purchases, a percentage of the back-end purchase, etc. You need to determine what types of deals bring in the biggest profits for you, while still providing a valuable incentive for your JV partners. And that really goes for any type of deal.

Lead generation JVs. Find out what other businesses your target market visits. For example, I sell to entrepreneurs, and a lot of them frequent the UPS Store and other such places. Fedex/Kinkos and other “copy shops” are also ideal places where I live. Many of these places don’t capture their customer’s name, address, email address, etc. So I made an arrangement with them. I setup “take ones,” where they can take a brochure for free, go online to my website, fax me, or mail me their contact info, then I send them a free report relevant to them. I give their contact info to the store I JV with (and I notify the prospects of this fact...it hasn’t seem to hurt my leads significantly so far). For those businesses (a Staples store, being one of them) that are stubborn, I offer to give them the contact info I collect from all the stores I JV with in their area. Again, you need to include a disclaimer when doing that, but in my tests, the benefit has outweighed the losses.

In a discussion with copywriter Michel Fortin recently, he mentioned that you need to really provide an incentive for these businesses to promote you. So the “take one” box may not be enough by itself. True, they are getting the contact info of some of their customers (something they themselves should be gathering), but if they don’t know enough to get that information in the first place, they may not be as anxious to promote your free report or premium.

Endorsements. There are people and businesses that have a great personal relationship with their customers and prospects. They may not necessarily know this fact. In fact, a lot of them don’t even realize the amount of pull they have with their audience. People who recommend certain stocks or trends, people who give great content and information to their subscribers, people who give investment advice, generally people who have a certain rapport with their subscribers. They are the ones you want to target. If their niche is non-marketing-related, so much the better in order to cut through this niche’s clutter. I know someone who targeted golf enthusiasts for a marketing product, simply because of their test results. In any case, if you can JV with this sort of person who will endorse your product or service, you have a huge advantage. It’s simply one of the best ways to print money on demand. Please don’t overlook this technique.

These people may not even realize the relationship they have with their list. So you would be well advised to start with those folks.

Look all around you. There are more ways to line up joint ventures and strategic alliances than you can shake a stick at. You just need to develop an open mindset that will soak up opportunities like a sponge. Reading the newspaper, business trade journals, and other publications, both online and

offline, can kick start ideas in your head when you least expect them. So think of the JV examples I've provided in this report as just the beginning.

Offline Marketing

Offline list building is usually referred to as generating leads, but the concept is the same. The fact is, you should be doing both online and offline marketing. And just like your online marketing, you test different strategies and keep doing what works and get rid of what doesn't work. Well, the same goes for offline marketing.

If you're not doing both, you are missing out on some serious profits. Even if you are making \$10K, \$50K, or \$100K a month online, why wouldn't you want more?

Consider that in the 15 countries with the highest rate of Internet usage, only 18% have Internet access. That means over 80% of your market never has a chance to hear your message. And the actual percentage is even higher, since many people use the Internet for email only. Even in the US, which has by far the largest share of Internet users, 37% of the population is not online -- that's over 110 million people!

But...consider this: of that potential 18% that are online and you do have the potential to reach, they are offline the majority of the time, where they won't see your message.

In other words, your target market is still likely larger in the offline world. By not marketing to them where they "live," you are missing out on a very big slice of the pie.

Most offline marketing techniques are fairly straightforward, and can be done for very cheaply or even free. Here are some of my favorites.

Classified ads. This is something everyone should be testing in some form or another. It's great for lead generations. You should still have a strong benefit-driven headline and a clear call to action. Free reports work very well with classifieds. My local paper, the Hartford Courant even has an ongoing deal of 3 lines for 3 days – for free! Even adding more lines only ends up costing a few bucks. With a price like that, there's no reason anyone with a website should not be testing ways to draw traffic to the site with classifieds.

Postcards. Yes, postcards are a form of direct mail, but it warrants its own category. Postcards are cheaper to produce and mail than full-blown direct mail packages or sales letters, and they are great for generating leads. Like classified ads, a free report or free gift often works well here. Postcards are also a great way to stay in touch with your customers and prospects, and they also work well as part of a sequence of mailings. A good place to go for customized postcards is <http://www.usps.com> (the US Postal Service website), because the USPS has

partnered with a company that will print and mail your postcards for you! Best of all, you only pay for the postage (i.e. FREE printing costs). Hint: be sure to include yourself on the mailing list so you can get your own mailing as well.

Flyers. Who says you can't hire a high school student to stuff mailboxes or stick 'em under windshields? Obviously if you are selling a high-priced financial course, it would be better to target the windshields of a fancy hotel than your local Wal-Mart. And I believe the US Postal Service also prints them for you like they do postcards if you want to mail them. Check out <http://www.usps.com>

Networking. Your local Chamber of Commerce, trade shows, seminars, and anywhere your prospects hang out are all good opportunities for networking. In many cases, the hotel bar the night before the seminar is the best opportunity for making contacts. It's usually more effective to try to capture contacts and leads than to try to close a sale on the spot, so get your elevator speech ready and have plenty of business cards on hand.

Card decks. These stacks of index cards are mailed to targeted audiences. Each deck can contain anywhere from 50 to 200 cards or so, each with an advertisement or coupon. They may also double as a business reply card on back. Since your ad is mixed in with tons of others, it's especially important to have a great headline and layout that will stand out from the clutter.

Card decks are inexpensive because all of the advertisers are sharing the cost of the mailing. They can cost as little as three cents a prospect for large mailings. Even for smaller mailings, they are generally cheap, which is good for testing.

Make sure you choose your audience wisely. Card decks are great for targeting a niche. Free reports or books work especially well here, because the person flipping through the cards will be attracted to the word "FREE." As always, make sure there is a clear call to action. Multiple methods of response usually work better than a single method. For example, they can drop the card in the mail, call a free recorded message, go to your website, etc. And you may have some options with remnant space, so always try to negotiate a lower price (how hard is it for them to stick another card in their mailing...their costs are incremental and their profit is high even on remnant rates).

A couple other tips: When you see repeat advertisers in a deck, you have a pretty good idea that the deck is working for that ad. If that ad also targets your niche market, it may be a good one to test in. Also, test with copy that you already know works.

Package inserts. If you're going to mail out a product or package to a customer anyway, always tuck a sales letter for another product in the package. It won't cost you any more, and when your customer receives that package, he or she will be pleased with the product (assuming your product isn't junk) and be more

favorable towards another purchase from you. You can also joint venture with other companies that target your niche market and get them to include your insert when shipping their product.

Teleseminars. Basically a conference call, we've all probably been on many of them. Some have organized them and have been speakers. They can be pure content (i.e. no obvious pitches) for strengthening social proof and building up anticipation for a new product to be released in the future. They can be a mixture of content and pitch. You can even arrange a series of them as a tele-course and charge big money to attend (Marc Goldman and Jay Abraham did this with a six-month long series, one per month, on joint ventures and deal making).

Word of mouth / viral marketing. The key here is create something that people will want to share. Yes, the "tell a friend" scripts are good online. But surely there's something you can think of to really "wow" them. You want to make them say "Wait until Jane sees this!"

One of the keys to making this work (and any sort of lead generation device) is to know your customer's lifetime value. In other words, what does your average customer in this market (using the type of lead generation you are doing) bring me in profits over their entire lifetime? Let's say it's \$25,000. And let's say your method of gathering leads converts 10% of leads into customers. Do you think it's wise to spend \$100 per lead of that type in your efforts? Seems like a no-brainer to me.

Creative business cards. Besides using both sides of your business cards and putting a compelling benefits-oriented message on it, there are many other creative ways to put your business card to work for you. Of course, odd-shaped and "rolodex-styled" cards stick out from the crowd as well. One real estate agent in California hands an extra three bucks and a business card to the toll collector as he crosses the bridge into San Francisco. He tells the toll collector that he wants to pay for the driver behind him, and asks him to give the driver his business card. Nine out of ten times, the driver calls, at least to say thank you. He's sold several expensive homes that way as a result.

A good lead generation device is to offer a free report or other gift on the back of the card. Then just distribute them where your prospects live.

At my local Munson's Chocolates outlet, Sales Manager Jim Florence has his business card fully imprinted with the company logo, name, phone number, and email address made out of...you guessed it...CHOCOLATE! (best business card I've ever eaten). A relatively new technology now allows Munson's to "print" in edible ink everything from text, images, logos, and photographs. With their business cards, customers get to taste their USP. How many other businesses offer that experience?

Issue a press release. An oldie, but goodie. The trick is to make sure your press release is a newsworthy event. For example, starting a new newsletter is not necessarily a newsworthy event (but it might in certain niche markets for smaller publications). Issuing a press release about a large donation you are giving, complete with relevant background story might be newsworthy. It all depends on your target audience and the publication(s). Editors pick up press releases if they think there is news for their readers. They do not care about you or your company. Your press release must be framed that way. “What’s in it for me” is very relevant here.

Write a book. With Print on Demand (POD) publishers, nowadays it’s easy and cheap to type up and edit a book in your favorite word processor, upload it to a POD’s server, and have the book available for shipping within weeks or less. Books are also a great way to position yourself as the expert. There’s something almost magical that takes place when you send your clients an autographed copy of your latest book. In their eyes, you instantly gain credibility. Your status becomes elevated. They are more likely to want to do business with you.

There’s little doubt that successful people want to surround themselves with other successful people. And a book shows them that you are successful. It gives you prestige. You are now an author. It’s far easier to dismiss your self-claims in a salesletter than it is from a book. The fact that anyone can have a book printed is irrelevant (at least for now).

If you don’t have the time or patience to write a book, you have several options:

- You can dictate the book and have it transcribed (elance.com and guru.com are good places to get a transcript done for you, but there are many other places online and offline to have them done as well).
- You can have someone ghostwrite the book for you. Be sure to check out their previous work, though!
- You can hold a teleseminar by yourself or with other experts and have it transcribed and edited into a book.
- You can get together with other experts in your field and each contribute a chapter or two for a book.
- You can interview other experts and compile it into a book.
- You can take books that are in the public domain, update it for today, and release it as a book (you may want to consider legal resources to make sure your choice is actually in the public domain...it’s not always straightforward).

As you can see, it's fairly easy to have a book done in very little time and at very little cost. Just be sure the subject and material is relevant and fills a need. Ideally a book can also be used as a selling device for a back-end item or as a lead generation device.

Ok, I would hope that out of all of these methods I've presented to get qualified traffic to your webpage, you've found at least a couple of new ones worth trying. But there's one more hurdle to get them to opt in once they arrive at your site...and it's a biggie.

Improving Your Opt-In Conversions

First, a word about name-squeeze pages. Squeeze pages, or the sales copy you use to get people to opt in to your list, have often been regarded as something that's less important than the actual sales copy for a product being sold. Nothing could be farther from the truth. In fact, as research shows it takes between seven and thirteen messages on average before someone will ultimately make a purchase, that list is more important than ever to build value and develop a relationship with your subscribers.

With the way things have evolved online, these days you need to write longer and more persuasive copy for your squeeze page. That doesn't mean long copy that's boring, or long copy just for the sake of being long. It means you must put in the same effort to create a persuasive squeeze page as you would in creating a sales letter for your products and services. Indeed giving up one's name and e-mail address is actually a form of payment.

And your offer to get them to opt in must contain true value. It must be an ethical bribe that, when presented, your prospect would actually pay money for it. It must be a no-brainer to subscribe. These days people can smell junk offers before they're even presented.

Obviously I can't cover every possible way to improve your conversion rate. But I will talk about some copy and persuasion elements that can have a serious impact on your bottom line. For even more proven ideas, I recommend you check out my companion report, *How to Maximize Your Landing Page Conversions*.

Remember...advertising is salesmanship multiplied. Nothing more. And advertising copy, or copywriting, is salesmanship in print. The purpose of a copywriter's job is to sell. Period. The selling is accomplished by persuasion with the written word, much like a television commercial sells (if done properly) by persuading with visuals and audio. And this fact holds true whether you're selling a \$5,000 seminar or merely selling them into providing their name and email address.

Focus on Them, Not You

When a prospect reads your name squeeze page, the one thing he will be wondering from the start is: “what’s in it for me?”

And if your copy doesn’t tell him, he’ll click away to another website faster than he can read the headline or lead.

A lot of marketers make this mistake. They focus on them as a company. How long they’ve been in business, who their biggest customers are, how they’ve spent ten years of research and millions of dollars on developing this product, blah, blah.

Actually, those points are important. But they should be expressed in a way that matters to your potential customer. Remember, once he’s left your site, you’ve lost a subscriber!

When writing your copy, it helps to think of it as writing a letter to an old friend. In fact, I often picture a friend of mine who most closely fits my prospect’s profile. What would I say to convince this friend to subscribe to my list? How would I target my friend’s objections and beliefs to help *my cause*?

When you’re writing to a friend, you’ll use the pronouns “I” and “you.” When trying to convince your friend, you might say: “Look, I know you think you’ve tried every widget out there. But you should know that...”

And it goes beyond just writing in the second person. That is, addressing your prospect as “you” within the copy. The fact of the matter is there are many successful ads that *weren’t* written in the second person. Some are written in the first person perspective, where the writer uses “I.” Other times the third person is used, with “she,” “he,” and “them.”

And even if you *do* write in the second person, it doesn’t necessarily mean your copy is about them.

For example:

“As a real estate agent, you can take comfort in the fact that I’ve sold over 10,000 homes and mastered the tricks of the trade”

Although you’re writing in the second person, you’re really still focusing on yourself.

So how *can* you focus on them? Glad you asked. One way is to...

Emphasize Benefits, Not Features

What are features? They are descriptions of what qualities a product possesses.

- The XYZ car delivers 55 miles per gallon in the city.
- Our ladder's frame is made from a lightweight durable steel alloy.
- Our glue is protected by a patent.
- This database has a built-in data-mining system.

And what are benefits? They are what those features mean to your prospects.

- You'll save money on gas *and* cut down on environmental pollutants when you use our energy saving high-performance hybrid car. Plus, you'll feel the extra *oomph* when you're passing cars, courtesy of the efficient electric motor, which they don't have!
- Lightweight durable steel-alloy frame means you'll be able to take it with you with ease, and use it in places most other ladders can't go, while still supporting up to 800 pounds. No more backaches lugging around that heavy ladder. And it'll last for 150 years, so you'll never need to buy another ladder again!
- Patent-protected glue ensures you can use it on wood, plastic, metal, ceramic, glass, and tile...without messy cleanup and without ever having to re-glue it again—guaranteed!
- You can instantly see the “big picture” hidden in your data, and pull the most arcane statistics on demand. Watch your business do a “180” in no time flat, when you instantly know why it's failing in the first place! It's all done with our built-in data-mining system that's so easy to use, my twelve year-old son used it successfully *right out of the box*.

I just made up those examples, but I think you understand my point. By the way, did you notice in the list of features where I wrote “steel alloy?” But in the benefits I wrote “steel-alloy” (with a hyphen). Not sure off-hand which one is correct, but I know which one I'd use. Here's why: you are not writing to impress your English teacher or win any awards. The only award you're after is your copy beating the control (control being the best-selling copy so far), so take some liberty in grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure. You want it to be read and acted upon, not read and admired!

But—back to benefits...

If you were selling an expensive watch, you wouldn't tell your reader that the face is 2 inches in diameter and the band is made of leather. You show him how the extra-large face will tell him the time at a glance. No sir! He won't have to squint

and look foolish to everyone around him trying to read this magnificent timepiece. And how about the way he'll project success and charisma when he wears the beautiful gold watch with its handcrafted custom leather band? How his lover will find him irresistible when he's all dressed up to go out, wearing the watch. Or how the watch's status and beauty will attract the ladies.

Incidentally, did you notice how I brought up *not squinting* as a benefit? Does that sound like a silly benefit? Not if you are selling to affluent baby boomers suffering from degrading vision. They probably hate it when someone they're trying to impress sees them squint in order to read something. It's all part of their inner desire, which you need to discover. And which even they may not know about. That is, until you show them a better way.

The point is to address the benefits of the product, not its features. And when you do that, you're focusing on your reader and his interests, his desires. The trick is to highlight those specific benefits (and word them correctly) that push your reader's emotional hot buttons. How do you do that? Read on!

Push Their Emotional Hot Buttons

This is where research really pays off. Because in order to push those buttons, you need to first know what they are.

Listen to this story first, and I'll tell you what I mean: Once upon a time a young man walked into a Chevrolet dealer's showroom to check out a Chevy Camaro. He had the money, and he was ready to make a buying decision. But he couldn't decide if he wanted to buy the Camaro or the Ford Mustang up the road at the Ford dealer.

A salesman approached him and soon discovered the man's dilemma.

"Tell me what you like best about the Camaro," said the salesman.

"It's a fast car. I like it for its speed."

After some more discussion, the salesman learned the man had just started dating a cute college cheerleader. So what did the salesman do?

Simple. He changed his pitch accordingly, to push the hot buttons he knew would help advance the sale. He told the man about how impressed his new girlfriend would be when he came home with this car! He placed the mental image in the man's mind of he and his girlfriend cruising to the beach in the Camaro. How all of his friends will be envious when they see him riding around with a beautiful girl in a beautiful car.

And suddenly the man saw it. He got it. And the salesman recognized this and piled it on even more. Before you know it, the man wrote a nice fat check to the Chevy dealership, because he was *sold!*

The salesman found those hot buttons and pushed them like never before until the man realized he wanted the Camaro more than he wanted his money.

I know what you're thinking...the man said he liked the car because it was fast, didn't he?

Yes, he did. But subconsciously, what he really desired was a car that would impress his girlfriend, his friends, and in his mind make them love him more! In his mind he equated speed with thrill. Not because he wanted an endless supply of speeding tickets, but because he thought that thrill would make him more attractive, more likeable.

Perhaps the man didn't even realize this fact himself. But the salesman sure did. And he knew which emotional hot buttons to press to get the sale.

Now, where does the research pay off? Well, a good salesman knows how to ask the kinds of questions that will tell him which buttons to press on the fly. When you're writing copy, you don't have that luxury. It's therefore very important to know upfront the wants, needs, and desires of your prospects for that very reason. If you haven't done your homework, your prospect is going to decide that he'd rather keep his money than buy your product. Remember, copywriting is [salesmanship in print!](#)

It's been said many times: People don't like to be sold. But they do like to buy. And they buy based on emotion first and foremost. Then they justify their decision with logic, *even after they are already sold emotionally.* So be sure to back up your emotional pitch with logic to nurture that justification at the end.

And while we're on the subject, let's talk a moment about perceived "hype" in a sales letter. A lot of more "conservative" advertisers have decided that they don't like hype, because they consider hype to be old news, been-there-and-done-that, my customers won't fall for hype, it's not believable anymore.

What they should realize is that hype itself does not sell well. Some less experienced copywriters often try to compensate for their lack of research or not fully understanding their target market or the product itself by adding tons of adjectives and adverbs and exclamation points and big bold type. Whew! If you do your job right, it's just not needed.

That's not to say some adverbs or adjectives don't have their place...only if they're used sparingly, and only if they advance the sale.

But I think you'd agree that backing up your copy with proof and believability will go a lot farther in convincing your prospects than "power words" alone. I say *power words*, because there are certain adverbs and adjectives that *have* been proven to make a difference when they're included. This by itself is not hype. But repeated too often, they become less effective, and they take away (at least in your prospect's mind) from the proof.

Which brings us into our next tip...

Incorporating Proof and Believability

When your prospect reads your ad, you want to make sure he believes any claims you make about the value you're providing. Because if there's any doubt in his mind, he won't bite, no matter how sweet the deal. In fact, the "too good to be true" mentality will virtually guarantee a lost sale...even if it is all true.

So what can you do to increase the *perception* of believability? Because after all, it's the perception you need to address up front. But of course you also must make sure your copy is accurate and truthful.

Here are some tried and tested methods that will help:

- If you're dealing with existing customers who already know you deliver as promised, emphasize that trust. Don't leave it up to them to figure it out. Make them stop, cock their heads, and say, "Oh, yeah. The ABC Company *has* never done me wrong before. I can trust them."
- Include testimonials of satisfied customers. Be sure to put full names and locations, where possible. Remember, "A.S." is a lot less believable than "Andy Sherman, Voorhees, NJ." If you can also include a picture of the customer and/or a professional title, that's even better. It doesn't matter that your testimonials aren't from somebody famous or that your prospect does not know these people personally. If you have enough compelling testimonials, and they're believable, you're much better off than not including them at all.
- Pepper your copy with facts and research findings to support your claims. Be sure to credit all sources, even if the fact is common knowledge, because a neutral source goes a long way towards credibility.
- When the copy is in the form of a letter from a specific individual, including a picture of that person helps. But unlike "traditional" real estate letters and other similar ads, I'd put the picture at the end near your signature, or midway through the copy, rather than at the top where it will detract from your headline. And...if your sales letter *is*

from a specific individual, be sure to include his credentials to establish him as an expert in his field (relating to your product or service, of course).

- If applicable, cite any awards or third-party reviews the product or service has received.
- If you've sold a lot of widgets, tell them. It's the old "10 million people can't be wrong" adage (they can be, but your prospect will likely take your side on the matter).
- If you can swing it, adding a celebrity endorsement will always help to establish credibility. Heck, if 'ol honest Abe Lincoln recommended your ezine and backs up your claims, it must be true! Ok, you get the idea, though.
- When it makes sense, use 3rd party testimonials. What are 3rd party testimonials? Here's some examples from some Web site copy I wrote when there weren't many customer testimonials available yet:

"Spyware, without question, is on an exponential rise over the last six months."

- Alfred Huger, Senior Director of Engineering, Symantec Security Response (maker of Norton security software)

"Simply clicking on a banner ad can install spyware."

- Dave Methvin, Chief Technology Officer, PC Pitstop

A deployment method is to "trick users into consenting to a software download they think they absolutely need"

- Paul Bryan, Director, Security And Technology Unit, Microsoft

Do you see what I did? I took quotes from experts in their respective fields and turned them to my side. But...be sure to get their consent or permission from the copyright holder if there's ever any question about copyrighted materials as your source. Note that I also pushed an emotional hot button: fear. It's been proven that people will generally do more to avoid pain than to obtain pleasure. So why not use that tidbit of info to your advantage?

- Reveal a flaw about your product. This helps alleviate the "too good to be true" syndrome. You reveal a flaw that isn't really a flaw. Or reveal a flaw that is minor, just to show that you're being "up front" about your product's shortcomings.

Example: “You’re probably thinking right now that this tennis racket is a miracle worker—and it is. But I must tell you that it has one little...shortcoming.

My racket takes about 2 weeks to get used to. In fact, when you first start using it, your game will actually get worse. But if you can just ride it out, you’ll see a tremendous improvement in your volleys, net play, serves, ...” And so on.

There’s a tendency to think, with all of the ads that we are bombarded with today, that every advertiser is always putting his best foot forward, so to speak. And I think that line of reasoning is accurate, to a point. But isn’t it refreshing when someone stands out from the crowd and is honest? In other words, your reader will start to subconsciously believe that you are revealing all of the flaws, even though your best foot still stands forward.

- Use “lift notes.” These are a brief note or letter from a person of authority. Not necessary a celebrity, although that can add credibility, too. A person of authority is someone well recognized in their field (which is related to your product) that they are qualified to talk about. Lift notes may be a separate web page altogether (i.e. opens in a new window), part of the copy itself, or even in the form of a popover window. As always, test!
- If you are limiting the offer with a deadline “order by” date, be sure the deadline is real and does not change. Deadline dates that change every day are sure to reduce credibility. The prospect will suspect, “if his deadline date keeps changing, he’s not telling the truth about it...I wonder what else he’s not telling the truth about.”
- Avoid baseless “hype.” I discussed that in my previous tip. Enough said.

The Unique Selling Proposition (USP)

Also known as the unique selling *position*, the USP is often one of the most oft-misunderstood elements of a good sales letter. It’s what separates your product or service from your competitors. Let’s take a quick look at some unique selling propositions for a product itself:

- 1) **Lowest Price** – If you’ve got the corner marketed on budget prices, flaunt it. Wal-Mart has made this USP famous lately, but it’s not new to them. In fact, selling for cheaper has been around as long as capitalism itself. Personally, I’m not crazy about price wars, because someone can

always come along and sell for cheaper. Then it's time for a new strategy...

2) **Superior Quality** – If it outperforms your competitor's product or is made with higher quality materials, it's a good bet that you could use this fact to your advantage. For example, compare Breyers Ice Cream to their competitor's. From the packaging to the wholesome superior ingredients, the quality is evident. It may cost a little more than their competitor's ice cream, but for their market, it sells.

3) **Superior Service** – If you offer superior service over your competitor's, people will buy from you instead. This is especially true with certain markets that are all about service: long-distance, Internet service providers, cable television, etc.

4) **Exclusive Rights** – My favorite! If you can legitimately claim that your product is protected by a patent or copyright, licensing agreement, etc., then you have a winner for exclusive rights. If you have a patent, even the *President of the U.S.* must buy it from you.

Ok, what if your product or service is no different than your competitor's? I would disagree, because there are always differences. The trick is to turn them into a positive advantage for you. You want to put your "best foot forward." So what can we do in this scenario?

One way is to present something that your company has devised internally that no other company does. Look, there's a reason why computer store "A" offers to beat their competitor's price for the same product by X%. If you look closely, the two packages are never exactly the same. Company "B" offers a free scanner, while company "A" offers a free printer. Or some other difference. They are comparing apples to oranges. So unless you find a company with the exact same package (you won't...they've seen to that), you won't be able to cash in.

But what if you truly have the same widget for sale as the guy up the road?

Unless your prospect knows the inner workings of both your and your competitor's product, including the manufacturing process, customer service, and everything in-between, then you have a little potential creative licensing here. But you must be truthful.

For example, if I tell my readers that my product is bathed in steam to ensure purity and cleanliness (like the cans and bottles in most beer manufacturing processes), it doesn't matter that Joe's Beer up the road does the same thing. That fact that Joe doesn't advertise this fact makes it a USP in your prospect's eyes.

Want some more USP examples?

- We are the only car repair shop that will *buy your car* if you are not 100 percent satisfied with our work.
- Delivered in 30 minutes or it's on us!
- No other furniture company will pay for your shipping.
- Our recipe is so secret, only three people in the world know it!

As with most ways to boost copy response, research is the key with your USP. Sometimes your USP is obvious, for example if you have a patent. Other times you must do a little legwork to discover it (or shape it to your target market).

Here's where a little persistence and in-person selling really pays off. Let me give you an example to illustrate what I mean:

Suppose your company sells beanbag chairs for kids. So you, being the wise marketer that you are, decide to sell these beanbags in person to prospects before writing your copy. After completing twenty different pitches for your product, you discover that 75 percent of those you visited asked if the chair would eventually leak. Since the chairs are for kids, it's only logical that parents would be concerned about their youngster jumping on it, rolling on it, and doing all things possible to break the seam and "spill the beans."

So when you write your copy, you make sure you address that issue: "You can rest assure that our super-strong beanbag chairs are triple-stitched for guaranteed leak-proof performance. No other company will make this guarantee about their beanbag chairs!"

The Headline

If you're going to make a single change to boost your response rate the most, focus on your headline (you *do* have one, don't you?).

Why? Because five times as many people read your headline than your copy. Quite simply, a headline is...an ad for your ad. People won't stop their busy lives to read your copy unless you give them a good reason to do so. So a good headline promises some news and a benefit.

Perhaps you're thinking, "What's this about news, you say?"

Think about the last time you browsed through your local newspaper. You checked out the articles, one by one, and occasionally an ad may have caught your eye. Which ads were the ones most likely to catch your eye?

The ones that looked like an article, of course.

The ones with the headline that promised news. The ones with fonts and type that closely resembled the fonts and type used in articles. The ones that were placed where articles were placed (as opposed to being placed on a full page of ads, for example).

And the ones with the most compelling headlines that convinced you it's worth a few minutes to read the copy.

The headline is *that* powerful and *that* important.

I've seen many ads over the years that didn't even *have* a headline. And that's just silly. It's the equivalent of flushing good money spent on advertising right down the toilet.

Why? Because your response can increase dramatically by not only adding a headline, but by making that headline almost impossible to resist *for your target market*.

And those last three words are important. *Your target market*.

For example, take a look at the following headline:

**Announcing...New High-Tech Gloves Protect Wearer
Against Hazardous Waste**

News, and a benefit.

Will that headline appeal to everyone?

No, and you don't care about everyone. But for someone who handles hazardous waste, they would sure appreciate knowing about this little gem.

That's your target market, and it's your job to get them to read your ad. Your headline is the way you do that.

Ok, now where do you find great headlines? You look at other successful ads (especially direct response) that have stood the test of time. You look for ads that run regularly in magazines and other publications. How do you know they're good? Because if they didn't do their job, the advertiser wouldn't keep running them again and again.

You get on the mailing lists of the big direct response companies like Agora and Boardroom and save their direct mail packages.

You read the National Enquirer.

Huh? You heard that correctly. The National Enquirer has some of the best headlines in the business. Pick up a recent issue and you'll see what I mean. Ok, now how could you adapt some of those headlines to your own product or service?

Your headline should create a sense of urgency. It should be as specific as possible (i.e. say \$1,007,274.23 instead of "a million dollars").

The headline appearance is also very important. Make sure the type used is bold and large, and different from the type used in the copy. Generally, longer headlines tend to out pull shorter ones, even when targeting more "conservative" prospects.

Some other sites online where you can get great headlines (from master copywriter John Carlton, no less) are:

- <http://www.otsdirect.com/products.html>
- <http://www.trsdirect.com/product.php>
- <http://www.ohpdirect.com/product.php>

On each page, click on the individual products in order to view the ads and headlines.

It should go without saying that when you use other successful headlines, you adapt them to your own product or service. Never copy a headline (or any other written copyrighted piece of work for that matter) word for word. Copywriters and ad agencies are notoriously famous for suing for plagiarism. And rightfully so.

The More You Tell, The More You Sell

The debate on using long copy versus short copy never seems to end. Usually it is a newcomer to copywriting who seems to think that long copy is boring and, well...long. "I would never read that much copy," they say.

The truth is, long versus short is relative, and consistent testing has shown that longer copy tends to out-pull shorter copy. Of course, there are always exceptions, and your own test results should be the deciding factor.

The person who says he would never read all that copy is making a big mistake in copywriting: he is going with his gut reaction instead of relying on test results.

He is thinking that he himself is the prospect. He's not. We're never our own prospects.

There have been many studies and split tests conducted on the long copy versus short copy debate. And the clear winner is always long copy. But that's targeted relevant long copy as opposed to untargeted boring long copy.

Some significant research has found that readership tends to fall off dramatically at around 300 words, but does not drop off again until around 3,000 words.

If I'm selling an expensive set of golf clubs and send my long copy to a person who's plays golf occasionally, or always wanted to try golf, I am sending my sales pitch to the wrong prospect. It is not targeted effectively. And so if a person who receives my long copy doesn't read past the 300th word, they weren't qualified for my offer in the first place. It wouldn't have mattered whether they read up to the 100th word or 10,000th word. They still wouldn't have made a purchase.

However, if I sent my long copy to an avid die-hard golfer, who just recently purchased other expensive golf products through the mail, painting an irresistible offer, telling him how my clubs will knock 10 strokes off his game, he'll likely read every word. And if I've targeted my message correctly, he will buy.

Remember, if your prospect is 3000 miles away, it's not easy for him to ask you a question. You must anticipate and answer all of his questions and overcome all objections in your copy if you are to be successful.

And make sure you don't throw everything you can think of under the sun in there. You only need to include as much information as you need to make the sale...and not one word more. If it takes a 10-page sales letter (when printed out), so be it. If it takes a 16-page one, fine. But if the 10-page sales letter tests better than the 16-page one, then by all means go with the winner.

Does that mean every prospect must read every word of your copy before he will order your product? Of course not. Some will read every word and then go back and reread it again. Some will read the headline and lead, then skim much of the body and land on the close. Some will scan the entire body, then go back and read it. All of those prospects may end up purchasing the offer, but they also all may have different styles of reading and skimming.

Which brings us to the next tip...

Write To Be Scanned

Your layout is very important in a sales letter, because you want your letter to look inviting, refreshing to the eyes. In short, you want your prospect to stop what he's doing and read your letter.

If he sees a letter with tiny margins, no indentations, no breaks in the text, no white space, and no subheads...if he sees a page of nothing but densely-packed words, do you think he'll be tempted to read it?

Not likely.

If you do have ample white space and generous margins, short sentences, short paragraphs, subheads, and an italicized or underlined word here and there for emphasis, it will certainly look more inviting to read.

When reading your letter, some prospects will start at the beginning and read word for word. Some will read the headline and maybe the lead, then read the "P.S." at the end of the letter and see who the letter is from, then start from the beginning.

And some folks will scan through your letter, noticing the various subheads strategically positioned by you throughout your letter, then decide if it's worth their time to read the entire thing. Some may never read the entire letter, but order anyways.

You must write for all of them. Interesting and compelling long copy for the studious reader, and short paragraphs and sentences, white space, and subheads for the skimmer.

Subheads are the smaller headlines sprinkled throughout your copy.

Like this.

When coming up with your headline, some of the headlines that didn't make the cut can make great subheads. A good subhead forces your prospect to keep reading, threading him along from start to finish throughout your copy, while also providing the glue necessary to keep skimmers skimming.

The Structure of AIDAS

There's a well-known structure in successful sales letters, described by the acronym *AIDA*.

AIDA stands for:

- Attention
- Interest
- Desire
- Action

First, you capture your prospect's attention. This is done with your headline and lead. If your ad fails to capture your prospect's attention, it fails completely. Your prospect doesn't read your stellar copy, and doesn't order your product or service.

Then you want to build a strong interest in your prospect. You want him to keep reading, because if he reads, he just might buy.

Next, you channel a desire. Having a targeted market for this is key, because you're not trying to create a desire where one did not already exist. You want to capitalize on an existing desire, which your prospect *may or may not know he already has*. And you want your prospect to experience that desire for your product or service.

Finally, you present a call to action. You want him to pick up the telephone, return the reply card, attend the sales presentation, order your product, whatever. You need to ask for the sale (or response, if that's the goal). You don't want to beat around the bush at this point. If your letter and AIDA structure is sound and persuasive, here's where you present the terms of your offer and urge the prospect to act now.

A lot has been written about the AIDA copywriting formula. I'd like to add one more letter to the acronym: *S for Satisfy*.

In the end, after the sale is made, you want to satisfy your prospect, who is now a customer. You want to deliver exactly what you promised (or even more), by the date you promised, in the manner you promised. In short, you want to give him every reason in the world to trust you the next time you sell him a back-end offer. And of course you'd rather he doesn't return the product (although if he does, you also execute your return policy *as promised*).

Either way, you want your customers to be satisfied. It will make you a lot more money in the long run.

And Finally...

Great copy is made, not born. It is derived from proven test results designed to do one thing and do it well: sell.

Effective advertising doesn't always use "grammatically correct" English. It uses short sentences, fragments. Like this. It convinces you to buy, and buy now. Period.

It talks about benefits, not features. It sells on emotion and reinforces the decision to buy with logic.

It paints a compelling picture and irresistible offer that forces your prospect to act and act now! And if it doesn't, then you drop that ad like a hot potato and go with one that does.

Effective persuasion is like your top salesperson--the one who continues to break all your sales records year after year--on the job 24 x 7, multiplied by thousands or millions! Just imagine if that salesperson, the one with proven results, could be multiplied as much as you wanted.

Now that would be effective (and cost-efficient) marketing!

And that's the kind of proven marketing I'm talking about here.

Conclusion

I hope these examples have helped you to develop the mindset to be on the lookout for opportunities everywhere. I've tried to arrange these ideas in a logical format, so you can print this report out and go through each one with a highlighter and pen, making notes, and adding your own thoughts.

There's a great quote: "*More occurs from movement than will ever happen from meditation and contemplation.*" And so I would strongly urge you to take action. Don't just read this and put it on a shelf or bury it on your computer's hard drive. Read it. Use it. Own it.

Take action and reap the rewards. To your great success!