

# *Cut to the Chase Marketing*<sup>TM</sup> **Fresh Ideas**

April 2018

## Keep an Eye on Online Review Sites

If your company's name comes up on review sites (type "your company name + reviews" into a search engine), you need to stay aware of any negative customer reviews.

As soon as a less than flattering review shows up, take a deep breath, then politely respond, offering to make things right however you can. This helps potentially resolve the problem AND show readers you stay on top of customer issues.

Sometimes you can also request the site remove bad reviews.

Make review monitoring easy with apps such as **BrightLocal**, **ReviewTrackers**, or **Talkwalker**.

The BEST way to counteract negative reviews? Encourage happy customers to post positive reviews.



## How to Write Effective Copy That Grabs Attention

by Nancy J. Wagner

I work with clients who enjoy writing their own copy. I also work with clients who prefer I write the copy. Even if you're not gun-ho on writing your own copy, knowing a few important tricks could help create some notes to share with your copywriter to make the process less time-consuming for both of you.



### Overcome Writer's Block

Everyone, even professional writers, gets writer's block at times. Walking away from your writing instrument can help relax your mind. But I find just jotting down simple ideas, such as a few words or phrases, helps me get started.

Ignore those rules teachers set up about making perfect sentences every time you write. Instead, write down the first thing that comes to mind. Don't worry how it sounds or if you misspelled the words. You may discover the words start flowing from there once you focus on what you offer instead of perfecting your spelling and grammar.

### Say It Informally

Write it like you say it. Simply speak out loud the words you would say to a prospect, and type or record those words while you speak. Keep the focus on the prospect – visualize a specific person, and then focus on enthusiastically telling them about your product or service. Don't worry about writing perfection while you do this – you can always edit later. Smartphone apps such as [Siri](#), [Dragon Dictation](#) or [Evernote](#) are perfect for recording.

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**Cut to the Chase Marketing**

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## **Start with the Problem**

Write about the problem your target market experiences. What problems does your product or service solve? What do people experience before they find the solution in your product?

## **Focus on Benefits**

Writing specifications and describing features is a necessity. But it's the *benefits* of what you sell that compel people to buy. Write down all of the benefits you can think of. Then choose three of the most important benefits, and use those in all of your marketing messages to build brand recognition and consistency.

## **Make the Headline Achieve One Thing**

That one thing? Convince readers to continue reading. Don't make it some kind of out-of-reach teaser or shocking headline. Instead, focus on what your prospect is searching for or the type of problem your product solves.

## **It's All About Editing**

For years, I thought I had to write copy that hit the mark the first time I put words on paper. It took me years to find out good copywriters know editing is about 80% of the process. Once you know you don't need to perfect the words the first time around, the pressure's off, and the creativity flows!

## **Avoid Passive Voice**

Inspire prospects to take action by using active voice in your descriptions. Avoid passive verbs (is, are) as much as possible.

*We'd be glad to help with your copywriting – just email or call Nancy. to get started. We also offer an interview process for those who have no interest or time to write. This process helps us create attention-grabbing copy based on over-the-phone interviews.*

## **Don't Skip Summer Mailers!**

While spring and fall are the best times to send postcards, flyers and sales letters, don't let up on summer mailings. After all, it takes at least 4 to 7 touches to get the largest number of people to buy from you, so you need summer mailings. Follow these 7 quick tips to improve your response rate during the summer as well as the rest of the year:



1. Use catchy, benefit oriented headlines that can be read in 8 seconds or less.
2. Use imagery to grab attention, as prospects tend to first pay attention to the visuals.
3. Include a clear, concise call for action.
4. If using a postcard, spend a little extra and go with an oversized one. Studies show prospects are more likely to read this larger sized mailer.
5. Include something bulky if you send your direct mail piece in an envelope. Curiosity will compel the recipient to open it to see what's inside.
6. Plan to send direct mail to the same list at least 3 times every few weeks. Sending more than 3 times is better. Send the same piece all three times, or if your budget allows, send 3 different ones.
7. If you offer a discount, provide an expiration date to prompt immediate action.

*Call or email Nancy for assistance designing and copywriting creative, attention-grabbing direct mail pieces. We can also help with attaining prospect databases as well as manage printing and mailing.*

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## Ready to Expand? 5 Things To Consider Before Selling Online

As business owners, it seems like everything we see says “sell online.” Selling online seems to especially appeal to businesses that already have an established presence in a traditional, offline market.

But how do you know if selling online is an affordable idea? Competition can be fierce online, so you often need a sizeable promotional budget to find and push traffic to your site.

As a business plan writer, I often see small businesses facing the online sales dilemma. One of the keys to determining a potential expansion requires taking the time to conduct due diligence, especially on the marketing side. Examine the numbers BEFORE you decide to invest in the marketing of your product, and you'll know if you're headed in the right direction.

### **Examine competing products and services.**

Take a careful look at what the competition offers. How can you make your product different? What benefits are you offering? Why should someone buy what you're selling rather than the competition's product? Keep in mind that even if you don't have direct competition, there's almost always something competing for that same dollar.

### **Run the numbers.**

I recently worked with a client that wanted to start selling their products online. Selling online was a brand new ballgame for them, though, as they traditionally sold everything via an in-person sales team.

Our research and subsequent financial analysis showed there were lots of competitors selling similar products online. In order to compete, they needed a large marketing budget for social media, Google Adword campaigns and other online promotions. Otherwise, they would struggle to get the traffic needed to be profitable.

*Figure out how long it will take to get up to speed making sales online. It doesn't just happen the moment you launch your website.*

The company changed their game plan after seeing the required budget. The cost to acquire new customers with online sales was just too great. They instead chose to strengthen their sales team's efforts and update their website so it worked better as a tool to help convince people to initiate a call.

### **Determine timeframe.**

Figure out how long it will take to get up to speed making sales online. It doesn't just happen the moment you launch your website. Look at the financial risks and plot out at least one to three years' worth of financials to determine how much money will be needed to keep things going while you build your online brand and make sales.

### **Look at fulfillment.**

Once you start ramping up sales, you need to put measures in place for processing and distributing product. Identify how this part of the expansion will take place based on volume increases. Determine the cost. You may need to add more staff, update equipment, increase customer support or install better software to turn new buyers into loyal customers.

If you need financing to expand, visit the [Small Business Administration](#) for help creating financial statements to evaluate your idea and to learn about funding possibilities.

## About Us

Cut to the Chase Marketing caters to small businesses, from sole proprietors to companies with up to 100 employees.

Although we choose to work solely with small businesses, we offer the full array of service you'd expect from a marketing/advertising firm.

We help our clients create effective marketing strategies, print marketing materials and ads, websites and social media campaigns that make their sales process more effective.

Nancy Wagner, owner of the company, is a marketing strategist, speaker and writer whose articles have appeared in *Nation's Business*, *USA Today*, *Emerging Business*, *The Mortgage Press*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Arizona Republic*, and the book, *Seattle: 150 Years of Progress*, among others.

She has trained business owners at several Puget Sound colleges as well as at the Washington State Business Fair, Small Business Administration, Women's Network for Entrepreneurial Training, chambers of commerce, business tradeshow, conferences, and other venues.

# LATEST NEWS

## Getting Emails... from DropBox? Be Careful!

There's a major email scam going on right now involving **Drop-Box**. The email says your DropBox account will be closed due to lack of use. It says you must click on the link provided in the email to keep your account activated.

Seems like lots of people are falling for this. The email looks legitimate, but it's actually a scam to get your DropBox login credentials. If you feel unsure, type in DropBox's website address in a browser window, rather than clicking on any links. Then login to your account to make sure everything looks okay.

## Catalog Shopping Isn't Dead!

According to the [Data & Marketing Association](#), 110.7 million adults in the United States purchased something from a catalog in 2016.

## Direct Mail Response Rates

Sending direct mail, such as postcards, letters and flyers to a company's in-house database of customers and prospects resulted in a 5.3% response in 2016. Response rates to direct mail sent to prospect lists came in at 2.9%, according to the DMA.

## Domain name hosting: GoDaddy vs. Google

We're big fans of **GoDaddy**, thanks to their fast customer service. But if you're interested in keeping your domain name registration information private, we recommend registering a domain name with **Google**. It's a little cheaper and you get free registry privacy, something you have to pay for at GoDaddy.

## How Gen Z Uses Social Media

We see Gen Zers on their smartphones constantly. So it makes sense that 80% of Gen Z's purchases are influenced by social media, reports Retail Dive. But according to a study by [Response Media](#), they use social media platforms in different ways. They use **Snapchat** to talk about their day-to-day moments while posting on **Instagram** about their aspirations. They use **Twitter** for news and do research on **Facebook**.

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