

## Write to Generate Sales

By Denise McGill

Whether your small business is located in the Smoky Mountains, the plains of Nebraska, or a coastal Oregon burg, all business owners have one goal in common...to **sell** their product or service. So, what is one of the best ways to get customers to take notice of your products? You're looking at it...the power of words. Fresh, sales-driven writing grabs and holds a customer's attention. It makes them say, "I gotta have that" and keeps them coming back again and again to your product offerings.

You can use the writing techniques I will be introducing in more places that you imagined. Every time you sit down to create a sales letter to promote your business or introduce a new product line, you will have the need for persuasive, sales-oriented writing. Your website presents an immediate first impression and has the tremendous power to retain customers if your writing is tight, clear and fresh. Catalog descriptions, direct mail pieces, email promotions, ads and flyers *sell* product – write to create a strong bottom line!

### **Know who your customer is**

Before you begin writing *extraordinary* marketing materials, flyers or catalog product descriptions, get to know who your customer is. As simple as this seems, it is important to have a good understanding of your basic customer profile. Things like age group, demographics, income, interests and hobbies all play into who you are writing for. This allows you to get a good picture of your typical customer so you can better serve their needs. Most of us know who our local customers are, but if you have internet sales – you will have nationwide and even global customers. It pays to know your entire customer base.

Just as importantly, listen to what customers have to say. They can offer valuable insight into your product offerings, merchandise they would like to see offered or suggestions for improvement. Most customers are more than happy to offer feedback because you have acknowledged them as vital to your business.

### **As easy as talking to a neighbor**

Now that you have established who your customer is, let's talk about the style of writing. The trend is to keep your writing (also known as copy) conversational and informal. This means:

- build rapport with your customers and keep your writing understandable for EVERYONE. Don't make customers drag out the dictionary. Unless you are targeting a very specific customer niche, you stand to lose a broader customer base.
- keep hype to a minimum. No one likes to feel he or she is being "sold."

- create accurate, trustworthy copy. Not only does writing “honest” copy keep you out of hot water with your customers, it builds customer loyalty.
- be passionate about your business and products. It is infectious!

Writing so everyone can understand your copy keeps potential customers from tossing your promotion or catalog in the trash out of frustration. So keep it simple, friendly, engaging and conversational.

### **Appeal to the Senses**

To create this engaging, conversational copy, appeal to your customer’s senses. When a customer receives your catalog in the mail or are viewing products on your website, they don’t have the luxury of handling the merchandise. They can’t taste your award winning cinnamon rolls or hear your harbor wind chimes.

To sell product, your words must be the eyes, ears, nose, hands and taste buds for potential customers. The following fruitcake example lets your customer see, smell and taste the cake through description:

#### ***Simply Sinful Fruitcake***

*Bite sized pieces of luscious fruit cake smothered in creamy milk chocolate is an alluring temptation around the holidays or any occasion. Not to be confused with your plain jane fruit cake, this cake is loaded with cherries, candied pineapple, walnuts, pecans and raisins. Add 100 proof bourbon, premium dark rum and 84 proof brandy to this mixture and you have a treat no one can resist!*

By engaging a customer’s senses, you create a fruitcake description that a customer can literally taste and see. Bite sized portions, smothered in creamy milk chocolate and loaded with cherries...provide a mouth-watering description to let the customer experience the product as if they were in your bakery.

This is the first of four articles to give insight into writing copy for selling your goods and services. This first article lays a beginning foundation for creating sales-generating copy. Know your customer, keep the writing conversational and appeal to their senses. The next article will focus on product benefits. Today’s copy must do more than list product features; it must let the customer picture a better life!

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Denise McGill is a freelance copywriter specializing in catalog product description, copy makeovers, landing pages, promotional materials, sales letters, articles and more. Visit her website at <http://mcgillcopywriting.com> for more information.