

SALES LETTERS



When writing a sales letter, it is important to have a good attitude in order to sell your product or service, because the reader will want to know why they should spend their valuable time reading the letter. Therefore, you need to provide clear, specific information that will explain to the reader why they should be interested in buying your product or service.



Sales letters usually have a four-part strategy:



Catch the reader's eye: it is very crucial in a sales letter to attract the reader's attention or else you will probably fail to sell your product or service



Describe the product or service you are trying to sell



Convince your reader that your claims are accurate: back up your comments with research and facts



Give the reader opportunities to learn more about your product or service: provide the reader with a phone number, a Web site address, or some way for them to seek out information on their own

***CLOSET CARE
1248 SE Lancaster Blvd
Tigard, OR 97225***

July 7, 1999

Professor I.B. Writing,
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, CO 80523

Dear Mr. Writing:

Are you having trouble organizing your clothes into your existing closets? If you are like most Americans, you have trouble finding your favorite shirt when you really need it. This is why it is important to have an organized closet system.

At CLOSET CARE, we have the skills and experience to come in and help you with your closet needs. May we stop by and offer you a FREE estimate at how much it would cost you to rebuild your closet? If so, give us a call at 555-1212 and set up an appointment with one of your friendly operators.

Sincerely,

(signature here)

Kent Lenoir
President

KL/jt

INGREDIENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE SALES LETTER

The three most important ingredients of a sales letter



attention-getting headline



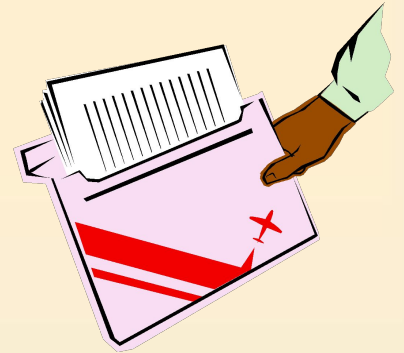
specific offer



P.S.

Attention-getting headline

The headline, placed before the salutation, should make a claim or a promise that ties in with recipients' needs and interests.



Whatever the Language, We'll Get Your Message Across Right - And With 25 Percent Savings the First Time You Hire Us!

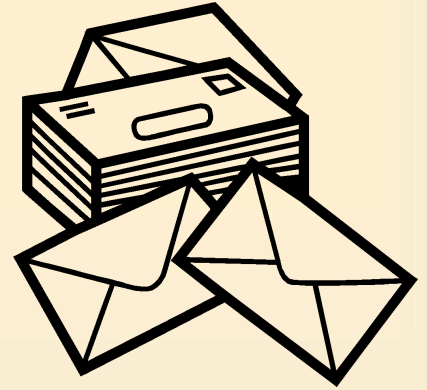
example

We'll Prepare Those Pesky 1099s and W-2s for Your Business Right Away - Absolutely Free!

Finally, an Organization That Fights Like Crazy to Protect and Heal Abused Children!

Specific offer

Your letter needs a clear and compelling offer, an explicit transaction that you are inviting the reader to make. Don't write "Hello, I exist" sales letter.

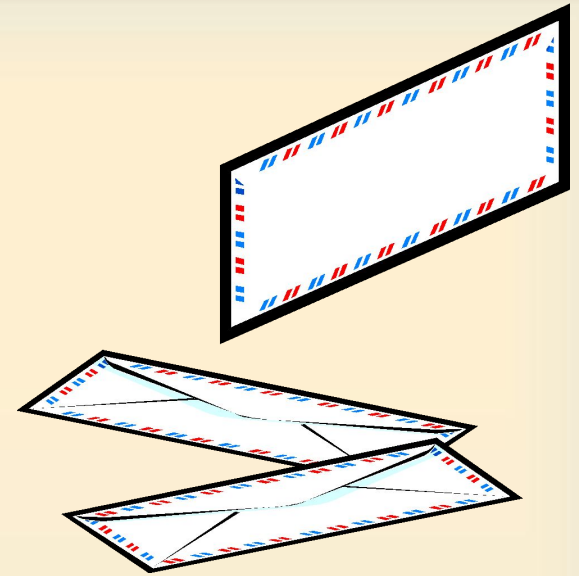


example

For only \$29.95 you can have unlimited use of our health club for one month, along with a one-hour private session with one of our certified fitness trainers.

P.S.

Your P.S., which is the second most read element in the letter after the headline, should mobilize the reader to act now. Provide an incentive for acting fast, or toss in an additional bonus.



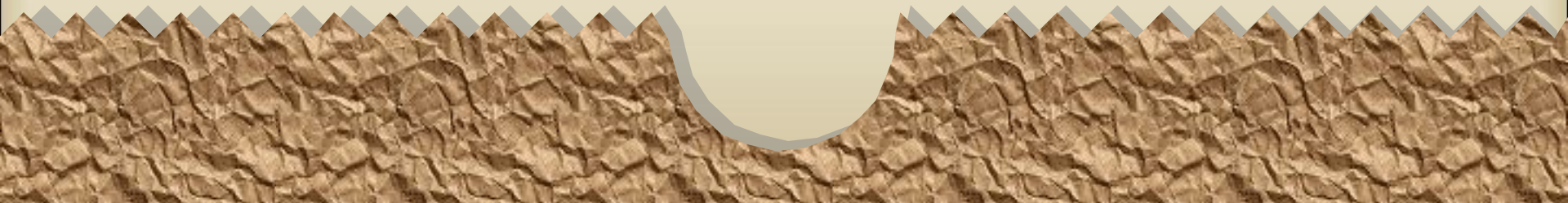
example

P.S. Charge your membership to your credit card in four equal payments for no additional cost - and receive a full-color desk calendar if you respond by November 10.

Hitting your targets

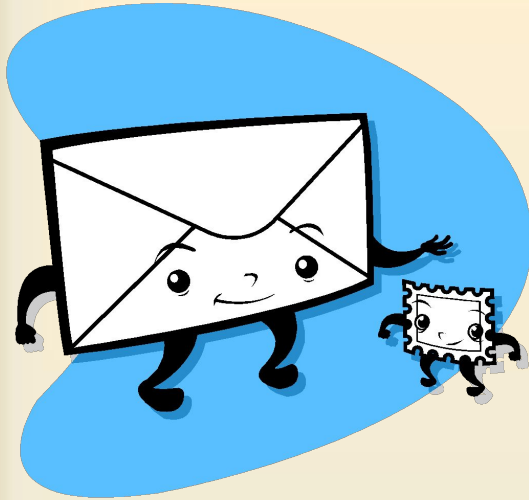
Before writing any sales letter, of course, you must do the homework of acquiring and analyzing appropriate lists of targeted customers

Sales letters are the most customized form of direct-mail marketing. Brochures or fliers, however glossy, tend to be impersonal and may be dismissed as "junk mail." By contrast, sales letters should address the customer by name and need. You're one step ahead. The idea is to offer solutions that speak directly to your customer's problems and challenges, whether that's business-to-consumer or business-to-business.



Hitting your targets

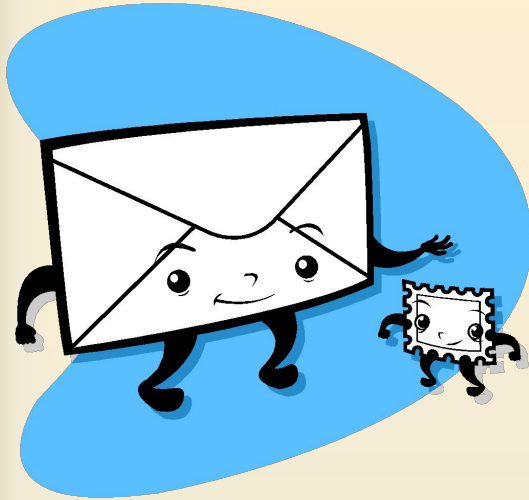
To send out the right sales letter



- **Build trust**
- **Get to bona fides, quick**
Some options:
 - List a case study
 - Describe a success story
 - Outline key benefits of your product (besides the first one)
 - Define a problem and how you solved it for a client (don't name names)Avoid being long-winded or boring in this "credentials" section

Hitting your targets

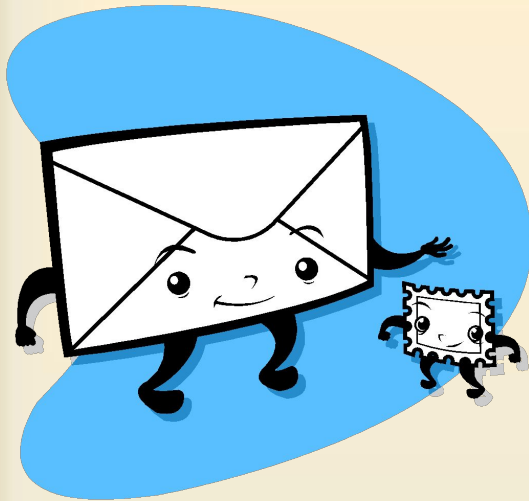
To send out the right sales letter



- **Emphasize good looks.** Make it easy to navigate so your reader reaches for it first-ahead of the competition's
- **Include a call to action.** Inform the reader about what he or she should do next.
Example is: *'Please call me on my cell phone (917-555-0000) before Friday, the 28th'*
- **Include an incentive.** Always explain when, why and how customers should act. Then, include an incentive for acting sooner, such as a discount, special offer or something free.

Hitting your targets

To send out the right sales letter



- **Resist "Mail Merge."** Tap your database for information about a customer's sales history and preferences. Then send specialized letters whenever it's appropriate.
- **Forge connections.** Similarly, don't get caught up in pushing services or products. You want to develop a long-term relationship with the customer, not pressure him into one discounted sale. Use your letter to investigate whether you can solve customer problems or meet needs. Try to build a relationship that will last into the future.

How to Write the Perfect Sales Letter

Create a short, powerful headline

Start the body of the letter with a polite but personal tone.

Ask a question that lists the greatest benefits of your offer. How will your product or service make your reader's life better? Why is your product or offer better than your competitor's?

Example: “Dear . . .” Use the potential customer's name. Talk to him or her as a friend

Example: “How would you like to receive (first benefit) and (second benefit)? Read on! This might be the most important letter you ever receive.”



Tip: DO NOT ask a question that can be answered with “yes” or “no.” You should control both the question and the answer!

Answer the question in one or two sentences. Explain why your product or service is essential or special. Achieving a better quality of life is a universal theme.

Address doubts before your potential customer has a chance to think of them:

“Sound too good to be true? I thought so when I first learned about . . .”

“I know this sounds outrageous. I'd be skeptical too.”

“Do these results sound unbelievable? I thought so too, but then”

Give a convincing answer:

List three good reasons that demonstrate how your product will make the reader's life better, make him feel more secure, or motivate him to action. Keep the reasons short and powerful. Use statements that suggest positive results, facts, and figures.

Examples: “But the more I learned about . . . , the more I knew that I should give it a try. Here's why you should too”

“Four out of five doctors recommend”

“Research shows that no other company can . . . like we can.”

“Four out of five customers agree that”



Tip: Keep your vocabulary simple, short, and to the point.

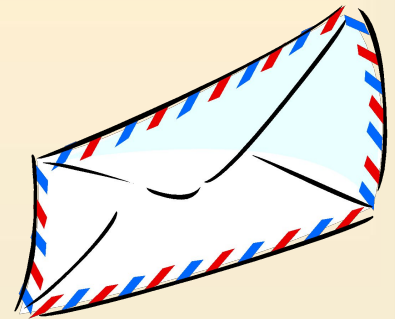
Now describe the special features and benefits of your product or service. A *feature* is something that makes your product or service extraordinary, essential or valuable. A feature describes what your product or service is or what it has. The *benefit* of the feature is what the feature will do for the reader. Bullet points are good to use here--they draw the eye to this important section. Benefits sell while features often do not. Many sales letters list benefits only. Others list both features and benefits. Writers often make the mistake of listing features only.

List three or five features with their special benefits.

Feature 1 -- Benefit 1

Feature 2 -- Benefit 2

Feature 3 -- Benefit 3



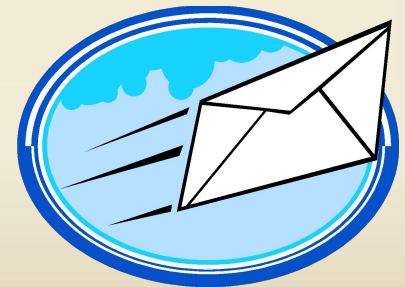
Tip: Odd-numbered lists seem to work better than even-numbered lists

Ask and answer one final question to lead the reader into the finer points of the offer. You may expand upon the features and benefits that you included in your answer.

Example : You may ask how we can possibly do all this? Here's how”

Endorsements sell because they establish credibility. List several short, enthusiastic testimonials that reinforce the features and benefits you have listed.

Example: “But you don't have to take my word for it. Here's what our satisfied customers are saying.”



Shoot holes in your competitors' offers.

Cost-to-value ratio is enormous.

Boldly state that your product or service has a real value of at least ten times the price. These value statements need to be clear and crisp, with not too many details. Perhaps your product can save valuable time, or make a huge difference in lifestyle, or replace another higher-priced product, etc.

“No one can match this offer.”

“Do not buy this product elsewhere unless it has these features: One . . . Two . . . Three ..”

“Sure, others will try to sell you a product of lesser quality, but can they offer you: One . . . Two . . . Three . . . ?”

“You'll get over ten times your money's worth in value! Guaranteed!”

“Extraordinary savings!” (or quality, add-on products, longevity, warranty, etc.)

“We offer you unbelievable quality for only one-tenth the usual price.”




Summarize. Briefly describe the complete product or service. You can remind the reader about the features and benefits, but don't list them. Rather, add several similar features and benefits and place a high value on them.

Price and urgency. Make a stipulation, then repeat the offer:

Example: “So here's everything you get . . .

Example: “If you respond by (date), you pay only \$_____. That's right, for the price of two movie tickets and popcorn you pay only \$_____, if you respond by (date).”



If this letter is to create a lead, tell your prospect what he/she must do to contact you by a certain deadline. Be sure to make it easy to respond by including your business name, phone number, web site, etc. Ask the customer for all of the information you need, such as first and last names, phone number, address, etc. Make an optional request for the customer's email address so that you can send future offers by email as well.



Example: “Order today and I’ll send you . . . --a \$50 value! But remember, I am offering this free bonus for a limited time . . . so order now!”

Premiums. Bundling a free bonus (a premium) for acting by the deadline is an excellent motivator.

Be sure to give the bonus value--as much or more than the purchase price is a good idea. If you don't have an idea for a premium, you can search the web for e-books or informational reports for which you can purchase reprint rights--an excellent and inexpensive idea that has a high value margin.



No-risk guarantee. You've heard and read many assurances before.

Examples:

“Buy completely at our own risk . . .”

“You pay nothing unless you are totally satisfied.”

“There is no risk with our complete satisfaction, money-back guarantee!”

“No questions asked. Simply return the product within 30 days and we'll refund your money in full.”

Then the advertisers always add the clincher.

Example: “Remember, you keep the free bonus(es). Even if you decide to take advantage of our No Risk, Total Satisfaction, Money-back Guarantee, the bonus(es) are yours to keep--our gift(s) to you for simply trying our”

consider adding a *postscript* to restate an important benefit and reinforce the urgency of the offer.

Dear Mr. Carling:

Go ahead, pull this amazing little card off the paper.

It's made of plastic. It costs you \$2 to buy. But it's worth the price of a new car, sold off your lot. This card is worth the lifetime value of a loyal customer. In sales, service, parts, accessories and referrals. And goodwill. And free word-of-mouth advertising.

Hold it in you hand for a minute, and think of your competition. Consider your revenue goals for the next quarter. Do you need to increase your new and used vehicle sales? Boost your parts & service department revenue? Multiply your accessories department revenue? Retain customers after their warranty runs out?

This card will help. Big time. It's a vital part of Sharpe AutoCards, a custom-branded loyalty and gift card program that generates revenue for your dealership. But first, how it works.

Take a look at the front of your card. As you can see, you customize the card to match your dealership's brand image and visual identity. Now turn it over. See that magnetic stripe across the back? It stores information about the card's dollar value and each transaction.

You hand cards like this to everyone whose business you want to attract and whose loyalty you must keep. Walk ins. Be Backs. Looky-Lous. Current customers. Even former customers. They all use the card to buy products and services at your auto dealership only.

You manage the program using a simple card reader hooked to a personal computer at your dealership running our software. For an average auto dealership, the start-up cost of buying the system and operating it for one year is less than \$2 per car sold that year.

That's what the card does. Here's what it does for you.

Please read the brochure I've enclosed for the compelling specifics. You use the Sharpe AutoCards card to:

1. Close more sales by beating competitors' discounts
2. Boost your service department revenue and repeat business
3. Multiply your accessories department revenue
4. Retain customers for years after the sale
5. Attract potential customers and increase traffic in your showroom
6. Increase referral business
7. Increase revenue on the back end
8. Promote brand awareness of your dealership

The Sharpe AutoCards system is up to five times less expensive than competing offerings. Plus, you pay no transaction fees and you don't have to buy any annual maintenance contracts. I call that a win-win-lose proposition for you, your customers and your competitors.

Use your card today to receive free coffee and donuts for four.

The gift card you are holding in your hand has been pre-loaded with \$10 worth of coffee and donuts. Get a first-hand demonstration of how the card works by inviting me to your showroom for a complimentary consultation about the Sharpe AutoCards system. Hand me your gift card, I'll swipe it, process your transaction, and hand over your free coffee and donuts. Like the gift cards you'll use one day, this one can only be redeemed at the place of business on the card, which is to say, Tri-City Chev-Olds.

When is a good time for us to get together for coffee and a chat at your showroom? Call me at 123 456-7891 today and let's set up an appointment.

Yours sincerely,

Additional Sales Letter Tips:

- **Price comes *after* the benefits.** Unless you are offering a blowout bargain, and price is the main benefit of your offer, mention price *after* describing the benefits.
- **Sell the smallest units.** If you are selling multiple units, then state, for example, “\$4.50 a box” rather than “\$45 per carton” to solicit the lowest amount of money. Accept charge cards if you are selling a high-priced item.
- **Supplementary Brochure.** An accompanying brochure could visually show the product or graphs research data described in the sales letter. Although a brochure adds cost to your mailing, studies show results jump markedly.
- **Design.** Keep the reader's eye moving by using several “tricks of the trade.”

Examples:

- ✓ Vary paragraph widths
- ✓ Add personal notes using a script font
- ✓ Use different colors to mark key phrases