

How to Develop a Great Sales Letter

There are many components to a great sales letter but before we delve into the subject, I would like to mention the three main functions of the sales letter.

1. Build Trust

2. Build Value

3. Close the Sale

It is important to keep these concepts uppermost in your thoughts as you are composing your letter. Your goal in writing each sentence is to move your customer towards one of these functions. A great litmus test is to ask yourself, "Does this sentence accomplish one of the three functions or is it moving my customer away from my goal".

To learn more about the three functions and why they are so important, please go to the article in the Introduction and Sample Articles section before continuing with this more in-depth article.

Sales Letter Components

The Trust Building Components

1. Hook
2. Introduction
3. Features and Benefits (also a value building component)
4. Testimonials
5. Guarantee (also a value building component)

Value Building

6. Added Value

Components for Closing the Sale

7. Immediacy
8. Close the Sale
9. Links to your shopping cart

1. Hook

The hook is just what its name implies. A sentence or group of statements that hooks your reader into wanting to read the rest of your sales letter.

A perusal of sales letters will show that many successful letters start with a statement that implies that no other product of this kind has ever been marketed.

At Last . . . a product that will clean your entire house while you sleep!

Finally . . . a machine that not only finds your lost socks, washes, dries, and sorts them with extreme accuracy but also puts them away!

Another important part of the hook which will help build trust is to make sure your customer knows that other people have purchased this product.

Join the others who awake each morning to a sparkling clean house

Become a part of the movement deemed by America's media as the most successful sock sorting society on

earth.

Of course I am being silly with my examples and you will want to be serious about your product but the technique is the same as I have demonstrated here. Hook your audience and build trust immediately. A third hook technique is to start the first sentence of your introductory paragraph with bold, colorful letters and then use dots . . . to entice your reader to read the rest of the paragraph below.

I was desperate for a solution to my housekeeping dilemma until . . .

I found the Housekeepers Dream Overnight Cleaning System. Until now, I never believed that there would be a way for me to work full-time, raise 10 children, volunteer at the homeless shelter, provide round-the-clock care for my elderly grandmother, cook 3 meals a day, and still keep my house spotlessly clean.

Another technique you will want to utilize in your hook is to get people to picture themselves with your product. Using the word, “Imagine” brings their focus onto themselves and how it would be if they owned this product. Envision, picture yourself, and visualize are all words which will accomplish this same thing.

Imagine waking up each morning to a flawlessly spotless house.

Because there are as many ways to write a hook as there are writers in America, I urge you to go web surfing to see how other people are hooking their audience. I don’t encourage plagiarism in any form but I do believe that one of the best ways to learn is by the example of others who have been successful.

2. Introduction

This is the section where you will introduce either yourself, your product or both.

Many times your product introduction will be interwoven with introducing yourself and how your product came about. Again, we want to build trust. Customers want to know there is a real person behind the webpage so personal introductions are highly encouraged.

If you prefer not to mention yourself and wish to remain anonymous, you can still do that but you must take care to introduce your product in a way that builds trust.

Here are some trust building words that you can use:

Proven

Reliable
Dependable
Steady
Established
Demonstrated
Confirmed
Verified

There are many, many others but this should give you a starting point.

3. Features and Benefits

Here is where you are going to go into the details and selling points of your product or service. Before you begin to write this section, brainstorm all of the features and benefits of your product.

One of my favorite ways to do this is to set a timer for two minutes and write down every single thing that comes to mind regarding this product. After I can't think of anything else, I separate the individual items so all of the similar thoughts are organized into categories. Then I look at each category to see if there is anything I need to add. Each of these categories will become a section within the features and benefits section of your sales letter.

For more complicated products or services that I am not as familiar with, I go online and research the features and benefits so I can offer my customers a comprehensive look at what I am offering.

This is also where you would provide samples.

We are still in the trust building phase of the sales letter so be sure to keep this in mind as you are writing this section.

4. Testimonials

One of the most important aspects of trust building is to incorporate testimonials into your sales letter. Testimonials are short endorsements of your product by people who have purchased and used your product.

In evaluating which testimonials to use, think of all of the benefits and features of your product. Each person who provides a testimonial will have one aspect that especially appeals to them. Your goal is to get one testimonial for each benefit and feature so as not to duplicate one area to the exclusion of the others. Your testimonials, as a whole, should represent your whole product and all of the benefits and features of that product. I like to think of it as a mosaic. Each tile represents a piece of the whole picture.

Some people like to interweave the testimonials throughout the sales letter. Others like to have a testimonials section. Sometimes people will have a link to their testimonials. All are effective and necessary for building enough trust for someone to purchase your product. If you link to your testimonials, be sure they open in a new window so your customer won't leave your sales page if they close the window.

5. Guarantee

It is vital for both building trust and building value that you offer a money back guarantee.

A guarantee builds trust by ensuring to a customer that they have nothing to lose because they will get their

money back if something is not the way you represented it in your sales letter.

A guarantee builds value because people are willing to take a chance and spend more money if they know they can get their money back if the product does not live up to the expectations. A low value item is not as important to have a guarantee as a large purchase. Many people don't think twice about spending \$10 and wouldn't bother to go through the trouble of getting a refund if they weren't happy with the product. Those same customers might hesitate at \$50. A guarantee helps them to decide the \$50 is worth it because they will go through the trouble of a refund if there is a problem. These figures were arbitrary. Each person has their own threshold of comfort in making online purchases.

6. Added Value

People want to know that they are getting as much for their money as possible. Bonus items are one of the best ways to accomplish this. I am not even going to try to go into all of the ways to offer bonus items that don't cost you extra money but I will list a few categories to help you get your thinking cap in gear.

Free eNewsletter

Free Membership to something such as a website, message board, or fan club

Unlimited Moral Support for the first 30 days

Develop a related document or documents that they can download

Provide links to free related software or ebooks

Free shipping

7. Immediacy

It is important to instill a sense of urgency in your customers. You don't want them to leave your website without making a purchase. There are several methods for doing this.

Offer a sale for a limited time - Sale ends today!

This is a limited, one time only offer and my bookkeeper will strangle me if I ever do this again.

This product is something your customer cannot afford to waste one more day without owning it.

The benefits cannot begin until the purchase is made.

8. Closing the Sale

Your customer is trying to decide if this is something they want or need. In closing a sale, you want to give options of how to buy, not options on whether or not to buy. By the time they reach this point in the sales letter, they have probably already decided that this is something they want and it is your job to give instructions on how to follow-through with a purchase.

Don't type things like - *If you have decided to purchase this product, go to (Link)*

Instead give specific instructions that promote action such as - *To immediately receive your download go to (link)*

Don't put this off another minute, go to (link) to start sorting your socks today!

You can scatter the purchase links throughout your sales letter. Make sure your customer has no trouble finding how to order. Some people like to hide their ordering information so people will hunt through their literature to try to find it. I find that distasteful and quickly leave sites that practice this type of marketing although they are probably being successful or they wouldn't continue engaging in this practice. I don't encourage it though.

9. Links to your Shopping Cart

Make sure your links work and are worded as an action for your customer to take. Some shopping carts provide professional graphics for their buttons and banners. These are wonderful tools to use and help build trust in your customer. The appearance of being professional is vitally important to your overall online image and nice looking links can help to build the confidence your customers need to follow through with a purchase.

Closing Thoughts

As you are creating your sales letter, keep in mind that honesty and integrity go much farther than exaggeration and stretching the truth. If you don't know how to bring out the best selling points of your product in a way that promotes honesty and integrity, ask for help. There are many people in this community who would be glad to help you find your product's true value without sacrificing your integrity.

This article was written by Julie Anderson, home school mom and author of, [The Full-Year Notebook System](#).