

How to Transform Ideas into Messages that Sell

by Carol Dunitz, Ph.D.

Before you create messages that sell, you have to have a basic understanding of the psychology of selling. Here's a quick overview of what you should consider. Use it as a springboard to discover more about communicating effectively.

Know Your Product or Service. Before you can sell something, you have to know about it. The better you know it, the easier it will be for you to inform, explain, and persuade. Once you know all about what you're selling, make a chart. On one side of your chart, list all the selling points of your product or service. On the other side, list all the benefits which can be derived from those selling points.

Know Your Customer. Who will use your product or service? What are they like? Where do they live? How old are they? Where do they shop? What are their interests? Answers to these and other questions will help you understand your prospects. You have to climb inside your prospects' heads. Become them. Then you can begin to understand what might motivate them.

Write Living Copy. Long complicated sentences are hard to follow. They fall on ears that won't listen and eyes that won't see. They lose your prospects interest instead of piquing it. Make sure you use language that speaks to real people. Have you ever observed how people speak. They use short sentences and sentence fragments. While writing is more formal than speaking, it is generally better to use a conversational style when you write.

Stress Benefits. Refer to the list of selling points and benefits you made. Let your prospects know how you, your service, or your product can be of benefit them. It is not enough to talk about selling points. Clearly point out what prospects have to gain. What's in it for them?

Cut to the Quick. Don't save the best for last. You don't want to lose your prospect's attention before you've finished delivering your message. Consider starting with a hook. Grab your prospects' attention and follow through with a finely crafted message that is sensitive to the time demands of your busy audience. In today's world, we all have so little time and appreciate it when those who want to communicate with us get to the point.

Differentiate Yourself from the Competition. Make sure your message is not generic. Sell your product or service, not those of others who have similar things to sell. Are there real differences between you and your competitors? Let your prospects know about them. No real differences? Create perceived benefits that make your product or service different and better.

Be a Word Surgeon. Proofread what you have written. Use your pen like a scalpel. Remove any extra, unnecessary language. Remove any extra, unnecessary ideas. Stay focused. This will stimulate interest.

Hype or Hip? Your prospects will know if you're using fluff, exaggerating, or being insincere. If you're genuinely excited about what you're selling, make sure that comes across. Enthusiasm and excitement are contagious.

A Spoonful of Sugar. Your prospects like fun. Helpful, entertaining communications are engaging and maintain interest. Be creative. Make it easy to spend time with your promotional messages.

A Star is Born. Your product or service is the star of any campaign you wage. Don't let the medium overshadow what you're selling. When you follow these suggestions, you'll be doing just what the pros do. Good luck converting all those great ideas into marketable messages.

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