

# Creating Trust - Using Words That Sell

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Listen to me carefully now . . .

If you have ever read anything I've written regarding how to increase your marketing results, you know by now that my style of writing is sharp, curt and cuts directly to the point. I don't mince words. This is not by accident but is rather by design. You are not reading this article for the sheer enjoyment of hearing me blather endlessly on and on about something, but are rather here looking for good information. This is what you will always get from me, using as few words as possible.

That being said, here is an extremely blunt statement. Everyone is selling something. Product, service, skill, knowledge consultation. Nothing happens at all until something of value changes hands. You might not believe this, or perhaps feel somehow that marketing is a four-letter word - something you would really prefer not get involved with. This is perfectly fine, but do not expect to be in business much longer.

Now, if you have made it this far without clicking away, what you have just seen me demonstrate is a 'technique'. Some of you may have been asking 'Who does this guy think he is, anyway?' Perhaps you felt a little twinge of anger as you read these words. This was done on purpose. This technique is called the 'slap'. The tone is carefully constructed to create a bit of controversy. It creates emotion. It creates tension. It is designed to 'slap' one into paying attention. Such is the power of the properly crafted written word. So let's begin again using a lighter tone . . .

For our purposes here, I shall define marketing as follows

**Marketing is the artful use of (any form of) communication to successfully convince another that you possess something of value to the receiver of that communication. Period.**

Your doctor is a marketer. Your minister is a marketer. Your significant other did a great job of marketing. Your children are learning.

When I write sales copy, my writing style is completely different. It has a different tone; a feel that is far removed from what I offer here, while speaking directly to potential marketers such as yourself.

As most of you know, I have worked in this field for around 30 years and have had the pleasure of helping hundreds upon hundreds of businesses get their message out to clients in such a way as to create positive action. Though marketing methodology changes due to improvement in delivery systems, the process of marketing changes not at all. This is because human nature changes not at all.

Writing good copy, copy that causes a perfect stranger to trust in you immediately, copy that causes your potential client to do business with you, is not easy. It is, in every sense, an art form.

I am frankly appalled at what I see when I examine the web pages, press releases and, in general, the image being projected by the words of those attempting to develop that all important trust with their potential clients. What follows are just a few examples regarding how you might begin to develop trust with your potential clients or customers, causing them to consider doing business with you, versus your competition.

The singular key ingredient is trust. You must create trust. Period.

#### **Owners Ads**

Anything can be said in myriad ways. The primary point you must understand is that it is NOT about you. I never cease to be amazed by the number of (what we in the business call) the 'owner's ads' out there. You've seen hundreds, perhaps thousands of these. They are the telltale mark of the inexperienced.

These are the messages that contain the picture of the owner IN THE AD. (Real estate people are famous for this). If the message is a television commercial, these might show the entire staff standing outside the building, waving politely at the camera or some such scene. Please do not get me started on websites. Websites are more than a simple message. Websites are an experience. As such, they can greatly increase delivery efficiency, or they can destroy your chances instantly.

The message these self-serving pieces send is a simple one: ME ME ME! Precisely the opposite of what a trust-building message should portray. If you are doing this, please stop it. Please. Stop it now. Your potential clients will thank you. Your wallet will thank you. Is that blunt enough for you?

When I was a very young puppy, brash, cocky and ready to tear up the world, I took my first job selling newspaper advertising. The 'owner's ad' concept was a carefully concealed joke between the cigar chomping, grizzled 'old school' veterans. We sold these types of ads all day long. We made a ton of money selling them to hapless business owners who bought them happily. 'Just put their picture on it and they'll buy it,' was a remark uttered often in the smoky inner sanctum of the newspaper sales office.

The older, experienced reps understood human nature. They knew that if the owner saw HIMSELF in the newspaper, the owner would run that ad forever, even if it produced no results whatsoever. This would fill the rep's pockets with commissions. The 'owner's ad'. Do not do this unless you have unlimited funding, love to waste money, or are trying to get even with the big boys upstairs by depleting their coffers.

Thankfully I changed my hairstyle and moved on long ago. But I never forgot what I learned in those early years and in the years since.

Do yourself a quick favor. Log onto your own website and count the number of instances of the word 'I' or 'we' or 'our company'. Then go back and count the number of instances of the word 'you'. You will see clearly what I mean.

Forgive me for saying this yet again. Website DESIGNERS are not marketers. They understand DESIGN. They understand language, but the language is html. They do not know how to deliver an effective marketing experience. Love them for what they do. Most ARE very good at what they do. But do NOT allow them to create the EXPERIENCE.

When you go to the movies, the projectionist does not write, direct and film the movie. Try to think of the website designer as an extremely talented projectionist. It is YOU that must write, direct and film your own movie.

Simply remember this: You do not create trust by showing your face. You create trust by showing your heart. Again, period.

You use words to show your heart, but they must be the RIGHT words. Let us look at a few examples. I will create two fictional business owners – Joe and Bob. Each own a widget factory. Joe is failing miserably while Bob is setting the world on fire. Let's look at the image they each portray.

Joe:

**'WE OFFER A 100% IRONCLAD MONEY BACK GUARANTEE!'**

This is good, but so what? So do most other companies. Though Joe believes he is creating trust with this statement, he is not. Indeed, he may be implying just the opposite. This implies that someone is going to be unhappy perhaps, or that someone has complained in the past. In addition, the capitals and the exclamation points are the equivalent of SCREAMING! Screaming does not create trust; it creates just the opposite.

Bob:

**'We want you to be happy with your purchase; our reputation depends on it. Nothing is more important to me personally than that you be completely satisfied with the service you receive. But if you are not satisfied, for any reason whatsoever, simply pick up the phone and call me personally at 888-777-9999, extension 103. I will have a refund check cut and sent to you within the hour.'**

Do you see the difference here? Very low-key. However, from this paragraph I can deduce:

1. Bob is the boss
2. Bob runs the place exclusively
3. Bob cares about the reputation of his company personally
4. Bob cares even more about me, as I am responsible for his success

Most importantly, Bob is not talking AT you. Bob is talking TO you. Directly.

When I write copy for my clients, be it website, brochures, letters, press releases, even a simple business card, I spend many hours not merely WRITING the message, but rather DEVELOPING the RIGHT message.

### **A 'No Brainer'**

For instance one of my clients asked me to create a simple newspaper ad recently. I spent about an hour in her antique store, filling out my questionnaires and forms. But I was not so much interested in her answers as I was interested in being immersed in the experience - her experience. The end result? The tag line of her ad now reads:

**' A Great Place To Spend An Afternoon'.**

This has nothing at all to do with antiques. But it clearly states what her store is all about. Copy writing is never a 'no brainer'. You would do well to have a third party take a look from the outside in. Get the opinions of others and put great stock in their perceptions of you. You simply cannot accomplish this yourself. You are far too involved to make an independent assessment. Make certain that third party is truly independent. Don't ask your partner. Don't ask your mother. Ask a stranger. A stranger will often tell you the truth.

### **Emphasis**

Capitalization and bold imply emphasis. Emphasis changes the entire meaning of the communication based on the word be emphasized. Let's try this statement, changing the capitalization:

Say these out loud.

' She is a great communicator'

This is just a simple statement of fact

“**SHE** is a great communicator”

This implies the emphasis is on her skills as compared to others

'She **IS** a great communicator'

This implies that her skills are a given and we recognize this.

'She is a **GREAT** communicator'

This implies that she stands head and shoulders above the competition

'She is a great **COMMUNICATOR**'

This implies that she has good communication skill but may be lacking in other areas. There is an implied 'but' after this statement . . .

Let's look at another example, a bit more subtle, this time from a brochure.

Joe:

**'Our company has been in business for over 100 years. We are the leaders in our field. My grandfather built our first store with his own hands!'**

Joe is getting a little better, but is not quite there yet . . .

Bob:

**'We have been providing quality widget consultation services to our customers since 1908. Our clients have made this company what it is today. We are extremely grateful for the trust you have placed in us throughout the years. We continually strive to continue to earn and continue to keep that trust.'**

I believe you are beginning to see the difference; ME ME ME vs YOU YOU YOU. This is so basic that it need not be verbalized. Again I am appalled when I view some of the messages being put forth in newspapers, tv, radio and on the web. 'WE did this' or 'WE did that' or 'WE got this account' or 'this group relies on US". Those who run these types of messages would do well to save their money. At all times, in his or her mind, your potential client is asking a single question:

'What can you do for me?'

### **Press Releases**

Let us look briefly now at Joe and Bob as they develop a press release for the local newspaper.

Joe:

### **STUNNING NEW DEVELOPMENT AT ABC WIDGETS!**

Capitals. Exclamation points. More screaming. More ME ME ME. Your local editor will can this in a proverbial heartbeat.

Bob:

### **XYZ Widgets Develops New Product To Cut Personal Widget Failure By 50%**

Ah. There might be something in this for – dare I say it? – me. The editor will see the value for his readers. The editor cares about one thing and one thing only. His readers. Joe is simply tooting his own widget horn. Bob, on the other hand, has created something that will help everyone personally. The editor will see this and will be far more likely to actually print this release.

On a side note, as an editor, I write reviews for books published by self published authors. I receive hundreds of requests for review in the form of press releases sent to me. Here is what I see over and over again, each and every day.

**“STUNNING NEW BOOK REVEALS . . . .”**

**‘GRIPPING NEW NOVEL DETAILS . . . ‘**

**“GROUNDBREAKING NEW STORY ABOUT . . . “**

As the editor in the Spiderman movies said, ‘Crap. Crap. Mega-crap’.

Nearly without exception, the press releases worded in this way are simply covering up the fact that these books hold little merit at all. I trashcan them without a second glance.

I once received a press release from a young man who started his release this way:

**“I Have Written A Book About . . . “**

I actually began to laugh. I was so intrigued by this approach that I read the entire thing. This man was selling a book for \$40. It was only 20 pages long! That is \$2 per page! He did not even have the expertise to set the price at \$39.99 in an attempt to fool me into believing the price was in the 30 dollar range.

I was so impressed that I immediately bought the book with my credit card, Believe this or not, it was one of the smartest buys I have ever made. Fantastic book.

Now, who in their right mind would pay \$40 for a 20 page book? Me. Why?

Because though this young man was inexperienced, rough, unlearned and so far out of bounds that it simply defied description, his press release sounded like a letter to his mother. He was honest. He was completely sincere. He was really proud of that book. He truly believed that the 20 page book he had written was well worth \$40. And do you know what? He was correct. It was.

If you can simply learn to speak to a large audience in the same manner you might speak to an individual person sitting at your kitchen table, you will create success beyond measure. This is what sets successful communicators apart from the crowd. We speak to just one person - a singular receiver. As I write this, I am envisioning myself speaking directly to you. Hence the style and the tone of this little piece. I am not worried about the thousands of others who might be peeking over our shoulders. I am speaking directly to you.

When writing press releases, never, EVER use a canned approach. Editors can spot this from several miles away. Editors know that the author of the press release IS the writer or business owner (or perhaps a paid PR person). Please be aware that if you attempt to write an effective press release by copying what others have written, you are doomed from the very start. The editor will not trust you. This is somewhat akin to that slick dude in the bar who says the same words to every girl he meets. Loser.

Writing words that cause your clients to make a buying decision comes down to a single point. You must create trust. People only do business with people they trust. The moment you say anything, make any statement that serves to destroy trust, you lose any chance of ever having that person become a customer or client.

Let us close this by looking at a newspaper advertisement. You will have to imagine this in your mind. Suppose Joe and Bob each run an ad, side by side in the newspaper. Each is 5 inches by 5 inches. Each features a picture of their respective widget factories.

Joe's ad text:

**ABC Widgets**

**We've been in business for 100 years!**

**We sell our widgets for 50% less than the competition!**

**Satisfaction guaranteed or your money back!**

**Don't wait until it's too late!**

**Your Widgets – Your Way!**

**888-777-6666**

Joe has said it all. ABC has the experience. Their cost structure is lower than anyone's. There is a money-back, iron clad guarantee. They have even developed a cool little tag line – 'Your Widgets – Your Way!' Joe has said it all! And that is precisely the problem.

Here is Bob's ad text.

**XYZ Widgets**

**Since 1908**

**888-666-5555**

Now, whom do you trust?

The impression being given here is that Bob need say nothing about his reputation or guarantees or pricing or anything of the sort. Bob ASSUMES everyone knows about these things. While Joe was screaming in everyone's ear, Bob destroyed him by simply stating

**'Since 1908'**

This is an example of how NOT saying something implies that it is a given.

I began this article by saying 'Listen to me carefully now.' You've most likely not read an article previously that began with such a statement. This was used to imply that I know what I am talking about. I used it to create a tiny bit of shock value.

Words create trust. Trust creates sales. It is the RIGHT words (or in some cases the lack of words) that will reveal your innermost intentions. Learning to use the right words to create the right impression should be foremost in your mind if you wish to be a successful builder of trust.

Look again at your own website, brochure or article. Would you actually say THAT to your neighbor while sitting on the back porch?

Now listen very carefully . . .

**Example 1**

**Don McCauley is a highly successful marketing consultant with 30 years of experience. He has built 3 successful practices personally from scratch and has helped hundreds of others build successful businesses by teaching them how to gain massive amounts of free publicity for little or no money. . .**

Wait. Wait. Now listen again . . .

**Example 2**

**I am a marketing consultant. 30 years. Built 3 successful practices personally from scratch. I have helped hundreds of others build successful businesses by teaching them how to get what is essentially free publicity - sometimes no out of pocket cost at all. I have a very long list of hundreds of real world references. You can call any one of them or ALL of them, if you like. They are real people with real working businesses. My reputation with each of them stands on its own. When you hire me, I will bring**

everything I know to the table for you. That's the best I can do for you. You will have my experience, working for you, even if it is your first day in business. . . .

No, wait. How about this . . .

**Example 3**

***Don McCauley. Experience. Trust. Proven results.***

No, no. . . hmmm . . . I know . . . here it is . . .

**Example 4**

***Our experience. Your success. Period.***

Any one of these examples will suffice, DEPENDING UPON the targeted market. Now, which one of these do I use?

It depends upon the intended receiver.

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