

Instant
Point Of Sale Systems



Introduction

Congratulations!!

Welcome to Instant Point Of Sale Systems, your do-it-yourself guide to creating an effective system for your company.

Once you've been through this guide, you'll know precisely what it takes to produce a Point Of Sale System, which generates increased sales. More importantly, you'll have a selection of effective systems to get you started.

This is the next step in your marketing success story. From this point on, you won't have to stab in the dark - you'll have clear direction. You'll start to see some real results for your marketing dollar.

I personally guarantee it.

How To Use This Guide

After reading the introduction and background, jump straight in and start going through **‘The 7 Steps To Point Of Sale System Success’**.

Each step covers an important aspect of Point Of Sale Systems - these are things that you must give careful consideration to... before spending hundreds of dollars on producing your new system.

You might be surprised with the how much this exercise reveals about your business. It may get you thinking about important issues that have never crossed your mind. If some of this information is new to you, don't be concerned - there's never been a better time to start seeing results from your Point Of Sale System.

Make sure you make notes in the spaces provided. When you come to putting together your first system, you'll need to refer back to these scribblings.

Later sections offer more in-depth explanations of how to come up with good headlines and offers that will have your customers buying. You'll even find headlines starters and examples of good offers.

The last sections bring it all together, with templates of different marketing pieces that will go together to form the basis for your new system. That means you can combine your new knowledge into a format you can be confident will bring results.

Now, it's time to get started - there's customers out there just waiting to come and deal with you. You just need the right Point Of Sale System ...



The Nature Of Point Of Sale Systems

What is a successful Point Of Sale System?

Basically any Point Of Sale System which results in increased sales, can be considered successful. The objective of your Point Of Sale System is not amuse your clients as they stand in a queue at your checkouts, the objective is to get them buying products that they may not have otherwise considered.

As you probably know, to get a new customer, you need to invest money in marketing. This means that you have an acquisition cost for each new customer. Your acquisition cost is determined by how much your marketing costs are, divided by how many customers it brings into your store. Once you've calculated this figure you can then work out how many times each customer needs to purchase from you before they become profitable. In the average business this will mean selling to them 2.5 times before you begin to make a profit.

Your Point Of Sale System then is the tool that you use to increase your average dollar sale. If your customers buy the bare minimum from you, you'll actually be losing money each time you acquire a new customer. By using a well thought out Point Of Sale System, you increase the amount of money that each customer spends with you, thus turning them into, a profitable customer.

What makes a successful Point Of Sale System?

There are a number of key elements which combined, go to making up a successful Point Of Sale System. The most important of these is the selling message. You'll find out which type of messages work best in later sections. Another important consideration is any offers you're making. No matter how well written, or entertaining your Point Of Sale System is, if you don't make great offers, it will not bring you additional sales.

In the following pages you'll learn how to write point of sale headlines that work, how to position your poster for maximum impact and which type faces have the best recognition. You'll discover how to use sales scripts, how to position slow moving stock and which angles and appeals work best.



Testing & Measuring

Before you get started, it's critical that you understand the principal of testing and measuring.

Just the same way you'd try different ads in the paper to see which one worked the best, you need to be prepared to change your counter displays around and find out which approach works the best.

Remember, it's always better to hand out 20 newsletters, catalogues or brochures that don't work, than 20,000. Even if you love your new system, and everyone who sees it goes crazy, it's important to keep your head, and avoid going too far too soon.

Take it slow at first, check the response then gradually increase the numbers. If you hand out 100 marketing pieces, and find that 10 of the coupons or ads come back, it should follow that 10,000 pieces should turn into 1000 additional sales.

Of course, nothing is ever *that* certain in marketing or business, and you really have to wait and see. Having said that, it's important to realise that if you hand out 100 pieces and see none back, then you'd be a little insane to expect 10,000 to do much better.

You have the option of creating a number of versions of your marketing pieces, and trying all versions at the same time. Ask each person where they heard about you, and which piece they have.

Over time, you may notice that one version seems to do much better than the other. This is the one you keep.

The problem is, creating marketing pieces can be expensive - there are the set-up costs, then the printing costs. If you were to create multiple versions, you'd end up spending quite a deal more than if you just decided on one and stuck to it.

Ultimately, it depends on how important these pieces are to your business. If they represent one of your most critical sources of new business and repeat sales, then it may be in your best long-term interests to pay for a variety of marketing pieces.

The other option is to create a small number (*about 20*) of each of the versions you're thinking about using. Show these to as many people as you can - customers, friends, family.

When they give you feedback, **LISTEN** to what they have to say. Don't block out their criticism of your favourite design, or minimise their praise of the one you didn't like.

It pays to not be precious about it - this isn't fine art we're talking about. Your marketing pieces are a business tool that is designed to make you money. Take note of what people say, and act accordingly.

When creating different versions, you should only really alter the most important parts of your hand outs.

Changing the size of your phone number from 12 points to 16 points is unlikely to have much difference, but a new headline, a different offer, and a change in the amount of text will make a big difference.

If you're going to test a few versions against each other, make sure that they are significantly different. There's no point spending all that money only to put out a number of pieces that look virtually the same, save a couple of truly unimportant differences.

You'll find that changing the headline, and the sub-headlines in the main content will completely change the amount of response.

Just as your marketing hand outs are an advertisement for your business, the headlines are the ads for the text of each hand out.

Compare these two headlines ...

“How to make more money ...”

OR

“How 37,600 Australian women under 27 are making \$2300 per week, every week without fail”

Which one would you read? The second headline definitely stimulates a hell of a lot more curiosity. Having said that, you can never be entirely sure which one will work the best. This is why testing and measuring is so important.

If you can understand that two headlines would bring in such a different response, you can understand why it's worth printing up a few versions and seeing which one takes off for you.

It's also important that you really take proper note of which one is working the best. Create a tally sheet and make sure you fill it in every time somebody comes in off one of your hand outs.

After a month or so, add up the tally and see which one is working the best.



The 7 Steps To Point Of Sale Success

1. Who (Are Your Target Market)?

If you don't know who your target market are, it's almost impossible to attract them. Imagine trying to get a date without knowing which gender you're interested in. You'd have to take the 'let's see' approach.

Unfortunately, the 'let's see' method of marketing tends to fail every time. You won't see anything, especially in the way of repeat business.

You need to know exactly who you're dealing with, what they're interested in and what's going to make them buy your products. If you don't know, you're really just taking your chances.

So let's get specific - who are the people most likely to be interested in your product or service. Here are some guidelines ...

Age: How old are they? Don't just say 'all ages' or 'a variety'. We want to create a picture in mind of your average customer. Think of an age that symbolises most of your customers.

Sex: Are they male or female? 'Half and half' is too broad. Practically every business is split one way or the other. Give it some real thought - which gender spends more with you and visits more often.

Income: How much do they make? Do they earn a great living, meaning that quality is the big issue, or are they scraping for every dollar, always looking for a deal. It's essential that you find this out.

Where do they live: Are they local, or do they come from miles around to deal with you? This will dictate how you communicate with them.

What are their interests: If you don't know what they're interested in, how can you design a Point Of Sale System that will capture their attention? If you only focus on writing headlines that you find interesting, rather than the ones that your customers find interesting, your Point Of Sale System will fail.

2. Where (to place your material)?

Ask most businesses what they hope to achieve with their Point Of Sale System and you'll get the same response - more sales. Of course this is exactly what you want to achieve, but aren't you forgetting something?

Your Point Of Sale System, can be an ideal tool for gathering a database. Imagine if every customer who came to your store was placed on a database. You could send them marketing material whenever you want. Of course once you have them on your database, you can start to add their friends and family to it, and your database will grow in no time.

But understanding that the main focus of your campaign should be on additional sales, you need to put some thought into where your material is going to go. But first, let's have a closer look at exactly what a Point of Sale System really is ...

Many people think that a few posters near their registers constitutes a Point Of Sale System, but it's not really that simple. Shelf talkers, catalogues, brochures, business cards and flyers can also be classed as part of your point of sale system. So as you can see, some thought needs to go into the placement of these items.

To understand where to place all these different marketing pieces, you need to understand the habits of your customers. For example, when they walk through your store, do they read the posters you have on the end of each aisle, do they look at the signs you have around the store to find the right section, or do they simply walk down each aisle?

If they don't pay any attention to the posters at the ends of your aisles, then maybe you need to make these larger, or change the colour or wording. You should also then ensure that your shelf talkers that are placed near the various

items along each aisle that you're trying to move. These need to have a strong selling message, and you need to make sure that they're clearly visible.




The other thing to consider is where they look when they're standing at your counter, or cash register waiting to be served. Take a moment to watch them from a distance, and make a note of where the majority of them appear to be looking. It pays to do this a few times over the course of a week, so you get a clear idea of what the average person does.

If you find that they simply stand there looking impatient, you may need to change your counter, or queuing area to make it easier for them to see your point of sale material.

Remember that you'll need to have things at eye level if you want your customers to take notice of it. Of course if you have long queues of people waiting from time to time, it would pay to have catalogue and brochure racks along the way that they could flick through, or take with them. A good way to make sure that your racks are in the right place, is to have a bar that guides them into the area where you want them to stand.

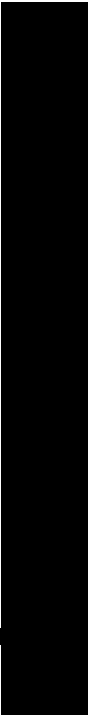

Now I know that this sounds a bit like you're building a stock race for sheep, but have you ever paid attention to how people look when they're in a line. It's not that dissimilar.

As I mentioned earlier, your point of sale material can be a great way to gather names for your database. Unconverted prospects should also be added to your companies mailing list. The reason for this is quite simple - the fact that they didn't buy from you the first time, doesn't mean that they won't buy from you in the future. You invested money in getting them to visit you in the first place, so why not invest a little more in getting them to come back.



There can be a variety of reasons why people don't buy from you initially. Perhaps you didn't have the exact model they were after, or maybe they weren't in a position to buy at that time. By keeping in contact with them, you give yourself the chance of doing business with them in the future. Even if they have bought from someone else, you might be able to pick up some business from them for their parts and accessories.

When you really think about it, the more people who are on your database, the more sales you'll make from it. All you need to make your business a success, is a database of prospects to mail it to.



3. What (Do You Want To Say)?


There's often heated debate about which type of point of sale material works best, but there's never a disagreement about which type don't - those with no obvious purpose.


For example, if you write a flyer, or poster that says '*Hi, we sell computer disks. We've been doing it for 12 years*', it's unlikely people will feel the urge to buy. Your material needs to give them a good reason to read, then a great reason to do something towards dealing with you.

Your material needs to have a clear purpose, and take people from point A to point B. Point A is your headline, which should identify where they are now. The body of the piece leads them to Point B, which is where you tell them why they should act right now, and how to do it.

Most important is understanding your customers. If you understand the needs, wants and position of your customer, you can sell almost anything to them.

If you nail the '*appeal*' and the message, you'll win.

Your point of sale material must do one of two things - provide a solution to a problem the prospect is having right now, or introduce them to something new that appeals. If it doesn't do one of these two things, and do it in a very specific and direct way, you need to ask 'what is this material designed to do?'.


You must decide on who you want to target, what you want to say to them and what you want them to do as a result of reading your point of sale material.


For instance, if you want people to buy a case of computer disks on their way out of your store, think about what you need to say to encourage them to do that.

What about *'Don't wait until you've run out of disks? Grab a pack of 25 disks for only \$5.95'*. This headline identifies the situation and offers the deal upfront. It takes the prospect from Point A (*Don't run out of computer disks? Here's an alternative*) to Point B (*The alternative is affordable and easy*).

It pays to remember that simply asking people to act now (*or for that matter, telling them to act now*) is rarely enough. You need to give them a good reason why **NOW** is the time to do something.

See, most purchases can be delayed forever. It's one thing to create desire, but it's another to actually get people to part with their cash. Every month, customers have to decide what to spend their money on. It could very realistically be a decision between buying your lovely oriental statuette, or buying the kids school shoes.

Every buyer has priorities. Of course, there are ways to re-arrange these priorities.

If you offer a special deal on the statuette, the customer may think *"well, the kids can wear those tatty sneakers a little longer - but I won't get this deal on this statuette again"*.

The question is, how do you offer a great deal without slicing your profit margin drastically. There's a couple of ways. First, make sure you are selling products or services with a high margin. Often, that's not possible - you simply can't get a high margin on petrol. If you have the option of gearing your business towards higher margin items, do so - it's much easier to come up with great deals.

If you can't do that, you need to find items or services that are highly valued by the customer, yet have a low cost. Extra service is an old standby, information booklets are another one. Even better are services you can get for free from other businesses. For example, a hairdresser could offer to introduce their clients to a beauty salon, if the beauty salon agrees to give every customer a free facial.

You'll find more details and examples on offers later on.

The other thing to bear in mind when writing point of sale material is the amount of information you should include. If you have to explain too much, perhaps you should look at another method. Remember that your customers may be in a hurry, and not want to stand at your counter reading a longwinded marketing piece.

Of course, it depends on the quality of your information and offer. If your headline is *'I have videotapes of what you did behind your husband's back'* and your offer is 'ask the sales person when you get served and you can have them back', you could fill a whole poster in small type - the prospect would read every word.

Generally though, it's best to keep it short and punchy. The general format is 'Hey you, here's a great deal, here's why you should take it up, here's why you should do it now'. If you have to say too much more than that, you should give some thought to whether point of sale material is the right way to go.

4. How (to put together your Point Of Sale System)

Now that we've covered the basics, it's time to get into the nuts and bolts of how to construct your Point Of Sale System ...

First, let's look at all the elements that go into making the ultimate Point Of Sale System ...

Shelf Talkers ...

No these are not little people who stand on your shelves telling people how good your products are. These are the signs that you place on selves that list the benefits, and key features of each product.

Now I don't mean every product in your store. Shelf talkers need to be used sparingly or people will start to ignore them. You should only place them under any products that are new in your store, that are on sale, or those that you're desperately trying to shift.

Now shelf talkers can be as simple as a sign saying '*Was \$29.95, now only \$12.95!!!*'. But more commonly they'll list the key benefits of the product in bullet point form. For example:

- **Easy To Clean**
- **Won't Rust**
- **Simple To Use**
- **Etc, etc.**

Because people will most likely just be glancing over these shelf talkers, it's important not to cram too much information onto them. A good powerful headline, and the key benefits clearly stated will do the job. If they need any further information they can read it on the pack, or ask one of your sales team.

Posters ...

Posters form the backbone of any Point Of Sale System. They can be placed throughout the store, or at your register, so people see them as they shop and are encouraged to take action. They're also a great way to draw attention to any flyers or catalogues that you have on your counters.

We'll talk more about the construction of posters and flyers (*which are in some ways just mini-posters any way*) in general advertising later in this section, but there are a few key points you need to understand ...

Your posters are a bit like a billboard. People will be walking past them quickly, so you can't place too many words on them. People generally don't have the time, nor the inclination to stand in front of a poster for any great length of time. Your poster is only there to get them interested enough to find out more. They can do this by looking at the product, or asking a member of your team.

If your poster is to grab attention, it needs to be **BIG, BOLD** and **COLOURFUL**. And if it's to be successful in making sales, it needs to have a strong selling message.

It's possible that your suppliers will already have posters made up. In fact, you'll probably find that most suppliers will have a complete point of sale system for each of their products. But understand that these companies are only promoting their own goods, and their material should only complement your system, not be viewed as your system.

If your suppliers don't have a system that you can use, why not offer to make up posters promoting their product. You can then ask your suppliers to help cover the cost of printing. This is known as co-operative advertising or

supplier subsidy. The way it works is simple. The majority of suppliers calculate an advertising fee into the prices they charge you for their goods. This is designed to cover the cost of any advertising that you run, which promotes their products.

Now your suppliers are unlikely to tell you that this is the case. Obviously if you don't ask for the money, then they get to keep it. But they are usually happy to help with the cost of the advertising provided it's within reason. Some suppliers won't give you money towards it, preferring to give you stock at cost instead. But let's face it, selling stock at a higher markup makes you more money anyway.

You'll find a subsidy request form in the templates section of this manual. Simply fill out the relevant details on the form and send it off. It's very unlikely that your suppliers won't give you some assistance. But remember they'll only help out when you're promoting their product. It's also worth remembering that they won't help you week in and week out. If you want them to help with a number of projects, put together a proposal with just one figure, rather than going back to them month after month.

Promotional Cards ...

If you've got people standing at your counter waiting to be served, it's a great opportunity to give them a promotional card. Now let me explain what I mean by promotional cards ...

Let's say that you've got a loyalty or bonus club that you're just starting. Now these clubs will usually have a card attached to them. By that I mean that the customers who are involved in the campaign will have a VIP card, or a bonus card where each time they make a purchase, they get credited with bonus points. Alternately they might be collecting stamps on their card to get some prize or reward when they get to a certain number.

Now if you have posters, or pamphlets that explain how they can become a part of the promotion, the chances are you'll get a lot more people joining in. This is particularly true, if you tell people to ask a member of your team how to join when they get served.

Another good idea is to have scratch it cards, where customers get a card if they spend a certain amount of money. The card works similar to Instant Scratch It cards, where they scratch off panels for the chance to win a prize. Now if you have posters or flyers that explain what they can win, and how much they have to spend to get a card, the chances are that people will buy something extra to get a card. Obviously people are not going to buy something they don't need, but they might purchase something they do need, earlier than what they otherwise might have.

Product Bins ...

As you're no doubt aware, a product bin is not a garbage receptacle where you throw slow moving stock. You definitely place slow moving stock in them, but not for the purpose of throwing them away.

Product bins are the tables, or core flute bins that you fill with any items that you're trying to sell off cheap. For example a hardware store might have a number of small hand tools that they're trying to get rid of. This might include things like spanners, screwdrivers and hammers.

There may be many reasons for the store to be trying to get rid of these items, needing to make space for new stock, discovering that these tools are poor quality or simply the fact that they've been sitting on the shelf for months. Whatever the reason, product bins are a good way to get the stock sold.

But obviously there are a few things you need to keep in mind when considering the use of product bins. Firstly, you need to be offering huge

savings, in some cases you're best to sell the stock at cost just to get rid of it. It would be ridiculous to think that simply by placing them on a display that they'll sell at full price. If they haven't sold at that price for the past 4 months, what makes you think they will now?

Another thing you need to put some thought into, is how to draw attention to your tables or bins. The obvious, and possibly most effective way is through placement. Having your product bins placed in high traffic areas, like the middle of your main aisle will get things moving. Another good place is near your cash register so people can rummage through the items whilst they wait. There's a good chance that they'll grab a few extra items before they leave.

You should also consider having large signs on, or above the bins that indicate what great savings are on offer. Things like '*Nothing Over \$10*', or '*50% OFF*' will get people looking. You might like to have a flashing light on the bins to grab the eye of customers as they walk past. These lights are also good for roving specials, where you have a time limited sale on various items throughout your store. You simply move the light to the next items that you're discounting (*normally 20 - 30%*), and then have someone announce the deals via a microphone and amplifier.

Video Catalogues ...

Don't ever limit yourself to stationary signage and displays when putting together your point of sale system. There are many other opportunities that you can look at that will give your system the edge. Among those is video displays or '*Video Catalogues*'.

The way this works is quite simple. You place a TV and video, near the products you're trying to promote, or near the store counter. You then run a promotional tape on a continuous loop. By that I mean that the tape keeps

playing over and over. On many new video machines, this can be as simple as setting repeat on the machine itself.

Video catalogues have a number of significant advantages. Not the least of which is the ability to demonstrate a product being used. Imagine if you had a new mop that could soak up any types of spillage. Now you could have posters and signage that would tell the customer what it does, but imagine the benefit of actually being able to **SHOW** them what it can do. This is one part of your system that's sure to make you more sales.

It's not uncommon to see people gathered around these promotional televisions watching goods being 'put through their paces'. It can generate huge amounts of interest, and increased store traffic. One of the ways in which it does this, is by using both sight and sound. Because the pictures are moving and not stationary, they tend to catch the consumers eye. But what if they're looking the other way? Well you then get a second chance with the commentary or sounds that are coming from the TV set.

So where do you get these tapes from? You basically have 2 worthwhile options, and no, shooting the tape yourself with a home handy cam is not one of them. You can't afford to have anything that looks tacky.

Your first option is to contact your suppliers and see what they have in the way of promotional videos. Some companies invest quite a deal of money having good quality tapes made up, and will be more than happy to supply you with a copy, free of charge. The other way, is to get someone to shoot a video for you. This is particularly effective if you want to demonstrate a service that you offer. Even if you don't take the products out of the box, but merely have someone walking around your store explaining the benefits to different items, you'll find it to be an effective tool.

Now there are any number of companies that specialise in this type of work. You can normally find them by looking in your local phone book. Their prices do vary, and you need to work out how many sales you have to make, to make it a profitable venture. If you don't believe that you can make the money back, then video catalogues might not be for you.

Audio Tapes ...

Smart business people have tapes produced that play to their customers when they phone in and are placed on-hold. These same tapes can be used to play through your stores PA system so people can listen to them while they shop.

These tapes can be made up to promote any specials you're currently running, or to talk about any new products or services you offer. But it's not a good idea to have these tapes playing all day. Listening to the same thing over and over again will send your team stir crazy. You're best to just run them for an hour or so during the stores busy times.

Checklists ...

This is a must. If you don't have a number of point of sale checklists scattered throughout your store, you've been missing out on thousands of dollars in extra revenue. Let me show you why ...

Imagine you own a paint store. Now customers who are looking to paint their house will come in and buy a few cans of paint from you. They'll probably also buy a paint brush or roller to paint with. But how many other things are they going to need as well? You need to have a checklist for them to look over that lists all the accessories they'll need to get the job done. For starters, they'll probably need drop sheets for any spillage of drips off the brush, a tray for the roller, a few different roller pads, a paint mixer/stirrer, maybe a ladder, thinners, overalls, something to clean the brushes in, maybe a few different sized brushes etc, etc.

Now if you print up a checklist, and have it strategically placed around your store, with a sign above it that says *'Don't even start painting your home until you've read this'*, you're certain to make additional sales.

Now whilst the example of the paint store is an obvious one, how many additional products could you potentially sell to your customers? For example a motorbike store could have a checklist which includes gloves, boots, chains etc, or a gardening store with a list of items like hoses, sprinklers, timers, shovels etc. You just need to look around your store, and work out what else you can on-sell.

Handy Hints & Tips Flyers ...

Often referred to as project sheets, hints & tips flyers are a guaranteed winner for many businesses. Picture this - A client walks into a store to buy a few things when they see a rack containing handy tips on how to do (X). They start reading, and the next minute they're hooked, and you've started to make sales that you otherwise wouldn't have made. Let's have a closer look at this system ...

Imagine a hardware store that had project sheets on how to prepare your house for painting, or how to lay pavers in your garden. This sort of free information is sure to be a winner, even with people who aren't looking to paint their house, or put a path in their garden. Clients will hold onto this information so they can refer back to it at a later date.

Flyers like this have the added benefit of allowing you to showcase your expertise. By answering some of the many questions that your clients have, you can show that for first class information and advice, yours is the only store to turn to. You have another more subtle benefit by including these marketing pieces. It comes in the form of getting people to buy more product, and embark on projects they might otherwise not have considered.

To give you an idea of how this might work, let's consider the hardware store again. Now if they were to display a Spring article talking about painting the exterior of your home, and explain that this was the best time to do it, there's a good chance that people might *'take the bait'* and decide to do it. They can then go on to list the best products to use, and include a special offer on some, or all of those products.

Place these project sheets in their own racks around your store, and see how quickly they start paying for themselves. For the cost of a few cents to photocopy them, you won't find a more cost effective marketing tool.

Catalogues & Brochures ...

Although it's an obvious choice for any POS system, very few people ever consider including their company catalogues and brochures. But it really does make sense to promote them in this fashion. I come across businesses all the time who have a group of loyal customers, who don't have any idea of the range of products and services the company offers. Sure they understand that they can get what they came in for, but they don't realise that the company offers so many other services. By leaving your brochures in a place where people can pick them up and browse through them, you have a chance to educate your clients on the spectrum of products and services you offer.

Simply place them on a stand with a sign that says *'Please Take One'*. You could of course use a strong selling headline. You'll find out more about writing those in a moment.

Of course educating your clients on everything you do is just one of the things you need to consider. When you have a sale, it's a good idea to have your catalogues spread around the store to encourage people to grab a bargain while they're there.

I've seen many businesses who place their catalogues on the counter for people to pickup as they leave. But when you think about it, isn't it better to give it to them when they come in. I mean really, they've just made the effort to drive to your store, find a car park, come in and wait at your checkout, and now you want them to go home, realise they should've brought a bargain, and then come back again? It's a bit too much to ask.

A better idea is to have them on a counter or table near your front door so they can grab one on the way in. Or if you have a spare team member, you could have them handing them out to people as they come in. this would be a great way to break the ice and get the customer to tell you what they're looking for. But no matter how you use them, you'll find that including brochures and catalogues in your POS system, will add dollars to your bottom line.

Newsletter & Business Cards ...

Just as catalogues and brochures should be included in your POS system, so should your newsletters. Whilst your brochures explain your full range of products and services, and your catalogues have the benefit of letting your customers know what's on sale, having your customers browse through your newsletter has many worthwhile benefits for your business.

Your newsletter is your chance to showcase your expertise, and has the advantage of letting people know of any upcoming events. To fully understand how your newsletter can assist you in making additional sales, you need to understand the sections that should be included in any newsletter...

1. Product Reviews ...

People who are interested in your products or services, will always be interested in finding out about new products, or in the case of a service based business, new techniques. Therefore previewing new products will ensure a high readership. Of course it will also generate increased sales. Customers are always looking for the latest and greatest, which makes this section of your newsletter a must.

2. Tips & Hints Section ...

The best way to ensure that they not only read your newsletter, but also start to collect each new issue, is to include some handy hints. I've already mentioned the importance of having project sheets and handy hints flyers as part of your POS system. Having an additional section in your newsletter will double the benefits.

3. Upcoming Events ...

People like to know what's going on, and hate to miss out on something special. Therefore you should include an upcoming events section in your newsletter. There are a number of things that you can include here, from upcoming sales and promotions to products that are due for release. Whatever you include, you're sure to see an increase in your business.

4. Introduce Your Team...

One of the real benefits of newsletters, are that they make your customers feel a part of what's happening in your business. They're being kept up to date with upcoming events and any changes to your stock or services, so they have the feeling of knowing what's going on.

A good way to add to this feeling of being *'part of the team'*, is by introducing your team members in a profile section. You see, people buy from people, not from companies. By letting people know a bit more about who they're dealing with, it makes them feel more comfortable buying from them.

5. Sales Sections ...

Ads and selling messages are the most important parts of your newsletter. You need to include a strong call to action in your ads, and even at the end of each article that relates to a product or a service. If your articles have got your clients interested in buying, you need a call to action to actually get them in. Coupons are a great way to make extra sales from your newsletters, and should be included where possible.

So as you can see there are many ways in which your newsletter helps you make additional sales. As with catalogues and brochures, you need to have them somewhere where the customers can see them and pick them up. But unlike brochures and catalogues, it's to have your customer pick them up as they leave, so they can take the time to read them at home.

Of course your business cards should also be given to customers at the point of sale. Simply sitting them on the counter, in a card holder is not enough. You need to be actively handing them out. But before you do that, you must make sure that your business cards are the type that will actually generate extra business.

A business card is, theoretically, a mobile advertisement for your business that works continuously. Every time the customer opens their wallet, you're right there, offering a reminder that you exist.

There are two important things to consider when designing your cards ...

First, is there anything about your business card that gives the customer a reason to hang on to it. Is it anything more than just a statement of business name and your contact details. If the customer wants to contact you again, they'll hang onto it. If they're not sure, they'll probably throw it away.

Second, does it encourage the customer to ring you. Does it actually **SELL** for you. Perhaps you're thinking '*a business card can't sell*'. Wrong!! A business card can sell like nothing else.

The important thing to remember is that a business card is nothing more than a mini-flyer, a little advertisement that can fit in someone's wallet or purse. It's like giving someone one of your flyers and saying, '*here, hang onto this*'. A well designed business card should be part of any POS system.

USP & Guarantee ...

Two things that you should consider promoting through your point of sale material are your USP and any guarantees. Your USP (*Unique Selling Proposition*) is the one thing that is truly different about you, or at least, the one thing that you can promote as being different.

A successful USP should be ...

1. Truly unique.
2. Exciting to your target market.
3. Something that will have your customers telling their friends about it.
4. Something that can't be easily copied.

A lot of business owners wonder why they need a uniqueness at all - shouldn't there be room for dozens of '*me-too*' businesses. The fact is, there isn't, and the '*me-too*' businesses will ultimately go to the wall.

If you don't have an existing USP, you'll need to find one. Start by listing down everything you do that could be considered even a little bit unique.

These points don't have to be earth shattering - just different enough to stand out.

To get your mind started, here is a list of some possible USP's you could adopt ...

- You sell a higher quality product or service, and you can specifically show how it benefits the customer in a meaningful way ...
- You provide better customer service and you can easily explain and promote why you're better ...
- You offer a better / longer guarantee and you have it written down ...
- You offer more choice / selection / options and this is something that people want and always look for ...
- You offer a trade-in program and no-one else does ...
- You serve a specific (yet sizable) demographic group that is overlooked by most competitors ...
- You offer a better / more generous bonus points or loyalty club system and your product or service is at least as good...
- You have the best after sales service and this is something that you can explain to people easily when they buy ...
- Your product or service has unique features that people care about ...
- You offer attractive products or services that no-one else does ...
- You have a '*special ingredient*' ...
- You install and deliver for free ...

These are just a few examples of unique, saleable points. If you think hard enough about it you're sure to find something that you are currently doing that is unique, or more likely, something that you **SHOULD** be doing that would make you unique.

Basically, your uniqueness comes from one of 7 areas - quality, price, service, delivery, speed, convenience, experience. Regardless of what it is, you need to promote it at every available opportunity, and there's no better place to start than with your Point Of Sale material.

General Advertising ...

So there you have a summary of the things you need to include in your Point Of Sale System. But that's only the first part of what you need to know. You also need to know how to write the copy, place any photographs and construct top headlines. What you'll find in this next section are general advertising tips that apply to all parts of your system. Whether you're writing a newsletter, a poster, shelf talkers or a project sheet, these principles will apply to all. So let's have a look at the things that make your advertising sell...

Headline ...

The most important part of any advertisement, poster, flyer or any other marketing piece for that matter, is the headline. David Ogilvy, one of the all time great direct response copywriters, once said that 10 times as many people will read the headline as will read the rest of your marketing piece. So if you get the headline wrong you can kiss 90% of your advertising dollars goodbye.

You will find out more about writing headlines in a later section but there are a few fundamentals that you should consider. One of the things you need to keep in mind, is that the headline needs to take up at least 25% of your advertisement, or other material. Before you finalise your POS headlines, write down 10 - 20 options and ask your friends and team members which ones they like best, and then go with the most popular.

Type faces ...

The type face or font that you use in your marketing pieces, can make a big difference to the results you achieve. The 2 basic types are Sans Serif and Serif fonts.

Sans Serif fonts don't have the little "*feet*" at the bottom of each letter. Studies have shown that people find these fonts far more difficult to read than serif fonts. Serif type has the little "*feet*" or "*hooks*" at the bottom of each letter. These "*feet*" appear to form a line under the words that your eye can follow. This isn't anything to worry about when choosing a font for a headline, but it certainly matters when you have a long block of text.

The most common type of serif font is Times New Roman. The most common sans serif font is called Arial. Times gives a more classic feel, whilst Arial seems more modern.

Computers offer a huge range of fonts, and it's cheap and easy to lay your hands on some more. You may end up with too much choice, which will ultimately slow you down.

It's best to choose a basic font that looks good, and suits your image. Try and use a serif font for the main body text. Your printer or graphic designer will almost certainly recommend Arial or Helvetica (*both are sans serif fonts*). To their artistic eyes, Times New Roman just looks plain.

Don't worry about that - the fonts you use in your headlines will give your advertising material the character. The font you use for your main text just needs to be easy to read.

Point Size ...

The size of the font you use is referred to as point size. Studies have shown that readership does not drop off between 14 to 7 1/2 point size. As a general rule 10 - 9 points are ideal. Obviously the larger the font, the easier it is to read so try to keep it as large as possible.

Highlighting text ...

Use bold type to highlight key points in your body copy, headlines and sub-headlines. Italics can also be used to highlight key areas of text, although it can be hard to read and should only be used sparingly. Never use all capitals. The only time you can use all capitals is in a short headline, or for extra emphasis on single words.

To make your material easier to read break your copy up into paragraphs. Indenting your paragraphs, rather than leaving a line between them, can cut down on wasted space. Also consider using a drop cap first letter, this is a great way to attract the eye of your customer.

Sub-headlines ...

Sub-headlines have 3 major benefits...

- 1.** They break up large blocks of text making them easier to read. If your copy looks like one big '*chuck*' of text it can put people off reading it. By using sub-headlines you can break your copy up and give it some '*space*'.
- 2.** They allow someone skimming over your material to only read the points that interest them.
- 3.** They spark the readers interest. If your headline doesn't get them in completely you can get a second chance with your sub-headlines.

It is important that your sub-headlines tell a story. Your sub-headlines need to be able to convey your message to those people who are just browsing through your advertising material.

Body Copy ...

You only get one chance with a potential customer, so your first 50 words are crucial. You must arouse your readers curiosity immediately, with the very first paragraph. If they're not excited after the first 50 words they won't read the rest of your article or ad.

Use the bare minimum of copy to get your message across, don't waffle on. But make sure that you include enough information to get your reader interested enough to call you. When writing any sort of marketing piece you should never tell the whole story. Tell them as much as you need, to get them to ask one of your team members. By holding back some information you make it necessary for them to ask you to find out more.

As far as your marketing pieces go, they should tell a story and be easy to read. When you finish writing your piece, get someone to look over it and critique it for you.

Pictures ...

Studies have shown that flyers and posters containing a picture that takes up between 25 - 75% of the total advertisement, have greater readership than those without one. You will probably need to put a fair amount of text in your material so 25% is probably the ideal size.

Pictures are also an important part of any promotional material. People are generally very visual, and therefore are attracted to photographs. Note I said photographs and not line drawing or clipart. You see, line art and clipart looks tacky. People are used to seeing photographs and are far more attracted to them.

So where ever possible, you should always use photographs in your pieces. The only exceptions should be small, humorous clipart pictures or line art in the form of technical drawings. For example if you want to show the inner working of a new watch, you might use a line drawing cross section to demonstrate the point you're trying to make.

Using real photographs can present a problem for some people who want to create their POS system themselves on their own computer. If you're considering this option you'll need to consider these points ...

For starters you'll need some way to place them electronically into your marketing pieces. Scanners are one way of doing this. A reasonable flatbed scanner will cost you less than \$200. But if you didn't want to go to this expense (*you still need to take the photo and have it developed in the first place*), you could always ask a friend to scan it and save it onto a disk for you. Alternately there are companies who will scan pictures for you at a price. Many photo labs offer this service, but the feasibility of having this done will depend on how many pictures you're scanning a year, and how much each scan costs you. It may work out cheaper just to buy a scanner and be done with it.

Another way you can place photographs in your marketing pieces, is by using a digital camera. Now a digital camera will cost you around \$500 to buy, but you can hire them for much less. The trick here is to hire one for a day, and take any pictures that you think you'll use over the course of the year. Now it obviously won't be possible to take photographs of all the new products you'll be previewing, as many of them won't be released when you hire the camera. But for those few exceptions, it's probably worth getting them scanned by your local photo lab.

Always put a caption under your photo. Everybody reads the captions so make sure you take advantage of this opportunity to get them to start reading your article.

Whilst people will find your material far more interesting if you include a few photographs, just throwing a few pictures in there won't work. You need to put some thought into the type of pictures and their positions.

Photographs of your premises (*crowded restaurants or clubs*), or your product are suitable for use in newsletters, brochures, flyers etc. The pictures need to back up your story. For example, a photograph of people having a great time in your club would help convince people, that your establishment is a fun place to be.

You can also use photographs of people using your product or service. These can be used to educate people on what it is that you do. This can also be a great way to teach people how easy it is to use your product.

Consider putting a photo of yourself in marketing material like your newsletter. People buy from people not companies, so let them see the person behind the company name. Place your photo so that it looks straight out off the page or towards your body copy. If your picture is looking into your article, your potential customers will also be drawn into it.

Colour ...

It could be argued that because people see in colour, your POS material should be printed in colour. Whilst this would seem a worthwhile argument, it pays to remember that most newspapers are printed in black and white. People are used to reading them, so why not your marketing material?

Printing your posters and flyers in colour will cost quite a bit more than standard black text on white writing. The aim of your marketing material is to get them spending more with you. Obviously then the less you need to invest to get them spending more, the better. If your headlines promise a benefit, your copy conveys your message, and your offer is worthwhile, it could be argued that you have no need for colour.

But most importantly you need to ask yourself 'is my material going to stand out well enough to be read, or will it be completely ignored?'. This is something that you'll have to guess to an extent, but it would pay at least in the early stages to keep the costs as low as possible.

If you're going to use any colour at all, you'd be well advised to print in full process colour. Research has shown that the difference between 2 colour and black and white advertising material is minimal and doesn't justify the extra expenditure.

Printing on coloured paper is an inexpensive way to brighten up your material. But be careful which colour paper you choose as it can make your text difficult to read. Keep this in mind if you decide to print your text in colour. As a general rule you're far better off printing your text in black as this will increase readability.

If you're going to use colours, it's worth noting the impact of colour psychology. Colour psychology is the study of how people are motivated, or respond to different colours. Whilst some colours will appeal to your clients and give them a good impression of your business, others will have the opposite effect. Here are a few examples of how colour psychology works ...

- Forest Green - appeals to the wealthy but may cause rejection in other economic groups
- Burgundy - same as forest green
- Bluish Red - appeals to women
- Yellowish Red - appeals to men
- Orange - makes people think the business is informal and open to everyone
- Yellow - gets attention, but can indicate cheapness
- White - good colour for décor, reminds people of dairy products and cleanliness
- Red - As it relates to food is an appetite enhancing colour
- Blues / Greens - In the food industry are appetite suppressants

Ultimately, I recommend that you trust your own instincts before worrying about the rules. Your opinion is just as valid as anybody else's - we've all grown up in the same society, and all have basically the same understanding of what colours mean.

For example, light blue will always be associated with clear skies. Red always means stop, green generally means go, or nature.

One strong recommendation - keep it simple! Putting too many colours in will only make your marketing material look like a technicolour nightmare. The fewer colours, the better. Limit yourself to about three (not including the photos, which will be full colour), then tastefully apply them to your marketing pieces.

LAYOUTS ...

You'll find a number of effective layouts in the examples and templates section. Some of the things to keep in mind when you're doing your layout, is how easy it is to read and understand your material.

Many people fall into the trap of trying to jazz their posters and flyers up by adding different shapes and elements. Unless you have a good deal of artistic ability, you're best off sticking with a more simple layout. Putting your headline at the top, your offer in the bottom right corner, and your pictures in the middle, may not sound exciting, but it will generally bring better results.

Try to do your layout in blocks. By this I mean placing the headline, copy, pictures and coupon in a blocked, or balanced layout on the page. Keep your layout tight and don't leave too much empty space on the page. You're paying for these marketing pieces so use every bit of them.

If you want your pieces to look professional, you should pay a graphic designer to do it for you. Professional designers can be quite expensive. If you want to save some money, contact a college or university that runs a graphic design course. This way you may be able to find a 2nd or 3rd year student who will do it for a reasonable price.

You might also consider getting a graphic artist to do just the first layout for you. Once you have this layout, you can then use it as a template for any future pieces.

Stock ...

Stock is the term used for the type of paper or card that you print your material on. There are numerous types for you to choose from. Should you use glossy paper or plain paper? Plain card or a textured card? These are just some of the questions to be answered when choosing your stock.

Just as there are a variety of materials, there are also a variety of prices, going from the very expensive to the down right cheap. Before deciding on the type to use for your particular marketing pieces you need to consider the type of product you're about to promote.


If you're selling expensive, good quality products you'll need to use better quality stock than you would for a cheaper product. You need to understand that by using high quality stock, your prospects will believe that yours is a high quality product.

Printing ...

Another consideration in the creation of your POS system is how to have it printed. This will depend largely on your budget, and the type of product you're trying to sell. You basically have 3 choices ...


Professional printer: This is more expensive but ensures that your material will look first rate. Always have your pieces professionally printed if your budget allows. This is a must for those higher priced products.

Personal printer: If you own, or have access to, a good quality computer printer you may be able to save on your printing cost. However you need to keep in mind the quality of the stock you use, and the price of your product.



If you're printing a large number of posters or flyers, it would probably work out more cost effective in the long run, to have them done professionally. You also need to keep in mind the size of things like store signs and posters. Because many of them will be hanging on a wall, or need to be read over a distance, you need to print them on large paper or card. The average personal printer will only do up to A3 which is not big enough for this purpose.

Photocopies: This is the bargain basement of printing. If you decide to go with this option, make sure that the quality of reproduction is high. Having black lines all over your material will make you, and your product look cheap and nasty. Only use this option as a last resort.



5. How Big (Should Your POS System Be)?

I'm glad you asked. See, there is a point where you can over do your POS system. If you have too many things for people to read and look at, they will become confused, or desensitised to it, and just not pay any attention at all. You see, the trick to having a good system is this ...

People need to view it as an assistance to them, not an intrusion.

If people think that your project sheets and catalogues actually help them shop in your store, they'll enjoy coming to you. On the other hand if they're being bombarded with information, and have things shoved in their face every time they turn a corner, they'll feel uncomfortable and won't come back.

I've spoken about a lot of different elements that can go into a successful POS system. But for the average business, I'd say using all of them would be overkill. You're better to simply choose the ones that you think will work best for your business, do them on a small scale to start with, and then test & measure.

You'll already have many of the elements produced and at your disposal. Things like catalogues and brochures are common place in most businesses, so it's simply a matter of using them more effectively. When you look at it, there's no need to spend thousands of dollars on your POS system. Because you have a few of the things I've mentioned already produced, you can afford to invest in a few of the things you don't have in place.

Understand that there's a lot more to working out the right size for a POS system than most people think. Because most of the expense you'll incur is in the printing, it's usually a case of '*How much can we afford to spend on the printing?*'.

The question really should be '*How much do we want to make?*'. If the material is good enough, it should make you money - not drain your funds.

If you don't have a marketing piece that you know works, you need to guess. You need to think about how many responses you need to '*break-even*'. That means, how many sales do you need to pay back the advertising cost.

Here's how you work it out ...

First, you need to work out your average profit. To do this, measure the amount of profit in each sale, every day for 3 days. Then, find the average. If you want to skip the hard work, estimate this figure.

Next, get a few quotes on the cost of printing. Remember that the idea is to keep the costs as low as possible, so get as many quotes as you can. This of course won't be such an issue if you decide to photocopy your newsletters, or run them off on your own printer.

Now, divide the production cost by your average profit. This will give you the number of sales you need to pay for the campaign.

Here's an example ...

Let's say a hairdresser makes about \$15 profit from each sale of shampoo and conditioner. They spend around \$270 getting their POS material printed. That means they need 18 customers to buy shampoo and conditioner as a result of their POS system. Anything less and the system is costing them money.

So work out how much your system is going to cost, and how much you need to sell to cover it. With a bit of time and effort, you'll come up with the system that's right for you.

6. How Often (To Change Your POS Material)

This depends largely on the type of business you're in, and how often your clients come in to your store.

Let me explain why ...

Your POS system works well when it's new and exciting to people. Once they've seen it a few times, they become used to it, and start to ignore it. So it follows that if yours is the type of business that people visit once or twice a week (*supermarket, hardware store etc*) then you'll need to change your system more often. But if you own a clothing store, and your clients come in on average 3 to 4 times a year you won't need to change it as often.

People make the mistake of thinking that because a poster has been on the wall for a month or two, that people aren't noticing it. But if many of your clients haven't been to your store for 3 or more months, it's all new to them and will work as well as it did the first time you put it up. Understand you'll get sick of your POS material before you clients will.

But obviously don't leave it until it's become well and truly dated. People are going to get a bit annoyed if your project sheets haven't changed since they were in your store 6 months ago. Keep things fresh and rotate your material as you have to. Remember that there's a lot of benefit in making changes for the sake of your team. If things look the same to them day in day out, they'll start to lose the passion for what they're doing.

7. What Else (Do You Need To Think About)?

Use this section as a final checklist - once you're happy with your POS material, run through and make sure you're ready to get started. Here are a few things you may not have thought of ...

Production: Make sure you check everything before it goes to print. Ask for a **'proof'** (*finished copy*) from the publication and check it thoroughly - don't let anything go out with spelling mistakes or the wrong offer.

Check Stock and Staff Levels: It's unlikely your new system will have your team run off their feet (*very few actually do*), but you need to be prepared for a sizable response. There would be nothing worse than implementing a successful POS system and then running out of stock, or being too busy to service the additional enquiries. Plan for the system - and make sure you can cater for any increased demand.

There are 3 more things I'd like to touch on, before I teach you how to write powerful headlines for your marketing pieces ...

1. **Store Layout** - Whilst it's not the intention of this manual to delve too deeply into this area, it is worth mentioning. Putting a bit of thought into how your store is laid out, will increase the enjoyment of the customers who visit you.

A good example of this, is a pharmacy I know who completely redid the layout of their store. See, they understood that narrow aisle ways and tall shelves made it difficult for some of their customers to shop in their store. Many of the people who came to them were elderly, had walking frames and couldn't negotiate the narrow corridors between the aisle. They also had difficulty in reaching items at the top of their existing shelves.

But there was another group of people that also had trouble in these areas. People in wheelchairs.

Now they understood that by catering for these groups, they'd get 100% of that market. Best of all, they wouldn't lose any of their other customers by making a few changes. In fact, when they increased the space between the aisles, and replaced the tall shelves with lower ones, many of their younger clients also found the store to be more '*user friendly*'. Now it took a bit of time to work out how to get the same amount of stock into the store, with more floor space, but as a team they got together and worked out a solution.

But it doesn't end there. There was still another market that nobody had catered for, that they wanted as their own customers - mothers who were breast feeding.

It can be awkward for mothers who need to feed their babies, but don't have somewhere private to do it. The shopping centre they were in didn't really cater for these ladies, as they expected them to go into the filthy shopping centre toilets. Now as soon as the store put in a maternity room, young mothers started flocking to the store in droves. Now some of them simply wanted to use the clean and comfortable facilities, but all of them made some purchase, all be it a small one. But the profits of the store went through the roof.

Now I'm not suggesting that these ideas will work for every business, but it is worth taking a moment to look at your store to see if it can be improved. A good example of someone who that did just that, is a clothing store I visited in America.




Now let me explain to you the frustration of being a male in a female clothes store. If you're a man you'll know what I mean, but for the females that are reading this manual let me just paint the picture for you ...

You're standing in a store that's full of women trying on clothes. There is nothing for you to look at, other than the floor. You feel uncomfortable to say the least. It's as if every other person in the store is looking at you like you're a pervert. All you want to do is get out. So what do you do? You rush your wife or girlfriend to hurry up and make up their mind so you can get out of there. Now is this what you, the store owner, wants? No. You want people to come in, spend as long as they like, so you get the chance to sell them something else.



Well this particular ladies clothing store in America realised that the longer their customer stayed in their store, the greater the chance to make a sale. So they invested just a few hundred dollars, in comfortable armchairs, a big screen TV, and a mini bar full of light beers, so that the husbands and boyfriends had something to do while their partners *'shopped till they dropped'*.

Now not only do the males prefer going there to avoid the other more embarrassing stores, they would actually try to get their partners to stay in the store longer. You see, this store has sports playing on the big screen because they know if a man gets enthralled in a game, that they're not going to want to leave. They'll actually give their partners more money to spend, just so they can keep watching the game!

So try to put yourself in the shoes of the customer when you look at your store. If the store is not 'user friendly', and makes some people feel uncomfortable, the chances are you're losing business.

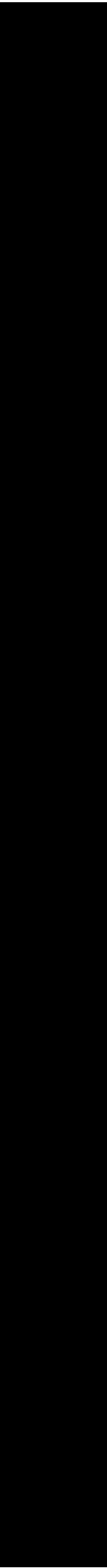



2. Merchandising - You could write a whole manual on this topic alone, but to make sure we don't get too side-tracked, I'll stick to the basics.





Writing 'Killer' Headlines




Writing a headline for an article, is very similar to writing one for an advertisement. Both headlines need to grab the readers attention and then sell. Only one sells a product or service, the other sells an idea.

The headline of any article must sell the reader on the idea that it's worth them taking the time to stop and read through. One of the easiest ways for you to get a feel for writing effective headlines for a press release, is to buy a number of newspapers and copy their style.

Writing headlines for different types of stories and businesses, requires slightly different styles. If you're writing for a retail store, your headline will be different than if you're writing for a manufacturing firm. You also need to keep in mind where your story is to run, and whether or not you want your story to be factual, or antagonistic.

Headline Starters ...

This is where you get to write potential headlines for your articles. You'll get a sharper focus of what you want to really say to your readers, as well as learning what makes a headline work ...



Quotes ...

Firstly, write two headlines that make use of what someone else has said about your product or service ...

Here are some examples ...

Leading authority claims George's Widgets are the best ...
George's Widgets are market leaders, says expert ...

Now it's your turn ...

Leading Authority

.....

Expert Claims

.....

Facts ...

Now, try two headlines using research figures or facts to back up your story... **Here are some examples ...**

Research shows that George's Widgets last longer ...
Studies prove George's Widgets are the best in the market
...

Now it's your turn ...

Research shows

.....

Studies prove

.....

Here's how ...

Next, try two headlines beginning with **“Here's how”**... here are some good examples ...

Here's how George's Widgets helps you live forever ...

Here's how to get the perfect Widget ... guaranteed

Now it's your turn ...

Here's how

.....

Here's how

.....

Company Name ...

Next, try two headlines beginning with your **“Company Name”**... here are some examples ...

George's Widget store to extend trading hours

George's Widget store, to employ 35 locals

Now it's your turn ...

Your company name

.....

Your company name

.....

Announcement ...

Now try two headlines beginning with “**Announcement**” ... here are some great examples ...

Announcement to be made on extended trading hours for local retailers

Announcement today on Widget exporters future

Now it's your turn .. .

Announcement

.....

Announcement

.....

New ...

Now try two headlines beginning with “**New**” ... here are some examples ...

New widgets actually repair themselves

New widget set to dominate market

Now it's your turn .. .

New

.....

New

.....

Local ...

Last, try two headlines beginning with “**Local**” ... here are some examples ...

Local manufacturer to export widgets

Local Widget manufacturer wins top award

Now it's your turn .. .

Local

.....

Local

.....

As I've already mentioned, writing headlines for your articles, is very similar to writing headlines for your ads. But there are some subtle differences. The best advertising headlines do 3 things - identify the right target market, provide benefits and generate enough interest to get them to start reading.

Let's look at each one in more depth ...

Identify The Right Target Market: You need to make sure that your target market see and read your ads. Your headline needs to immediately speak to them. There's nothing wrong with starting your headline with '**MOTHERS**' or even '**ATTENTION Ladies 37-40 with no children**'. Of course, there are other more subtle ways, such as '*Here's how to make your Ford go faster*' or '*Help the kids succeed at school this year*'.

Provide Benefits: You need to give your readers reasons to investigate further. Think about it - what is really going to make them want to read. A headline such as '*MEN: How you can have twice as much sex as you're having now ... guaranteed*' speaks for itself. What can you say about your product or service - what is the main benefit? Once you've thought of that, try coming up with some more specific and interesting ways of phrasing it. For example '*How you can make an extra \$4500 this year and pay off those credit card debts*' is more interesting than '*How you can make more money*'.

Generate Interest: There's nothing more powerful than curiosity. Compare these two headlines - 'AMWAY: a new future for you' and 'How you make \$1100 extra per week, by meeting 3 new people a month'. Both are for the same company, but one holds more interest value and is more likely to get you reading. Try getting the main benefit across without telling the whole story, and getting a bit of mystery in there. Of course, too much mystery can kill your whole ad. Who'd read an ad with a headline such as '*Pure grunt*', '*Big cheese*' or '*Stilted*'? No-one, as so many advertisers have discovered.

You've already written some test headlines for your articles, so now let's have a go at some for your ads ...

7 reasons ...

Firstly, write two headlines beginning with "**7 reasons**" ... Here are some examples ...

7 reasons YOU should call George's Widgets today ...

7 reasons to get your Widget from George's ...

Now it's your turn ...

7 reasons

.....

7 reasons

.....

Here's why ...

Now, try two headlines beginning with **“Here's why”** ... Here are some examples ...

Here's why George's is offering YOU a FREE box of Widgets ...

Here's why YOU need to call George's Widgets now ...

Now it's your turn ...

Here's why

.....

Here's why

.....

Here's how ...

Next, try two headlines beginning with **“Here's how”** ... here are some good examples ...

Here's how George's Widgets helps you live forever ...

Here's how to get the perfect Widget ... guaranteed

Now it's your turn ...

Here's how

.....

Here's how

.....

Announcing ...

Next, try two headlines beginning with “**Announcing**” ... here are some examples ...

Announcing ... a Widget dealer that guarantees your delight ...

Announcing ... a guaranteed way to lose weight using Widgets ...

Now it's your turn ...

Announcing

.....

Announcing

.....

DON'T ...

Now try two headlines beginning with “**DON'T**” ... here are some great examples ...

DON'T take another breath until you read this ...

DON'T call anyone about Widgets until YOU speak to George's

Now it's your turn .. .

DONT

.....

DONT

.....

Now ...

Last, try two headlines beginning with “**Now**” ... here are some examples ...

Now available ... home hairdressing kits that your teenage daughter will like

Now in pre-production ... a movie based on the life of Elvis Presley

Now it's your turn .. .

Now

.....

Now

.....



Offers

What works and what doesn't

So you've written a great headline, an exciting first paragraph and sub-headlines that tell a story. But what are you going to do to get your target market to respond? Great articles alone will not work, you need to have a strong offer, an offer that you would respond to.

So what is a great offer?

When thinking of what to offer your customers ask yourself - *'If I read this ad or article, would the offer be good enough to make me respond?'* If the answer is no, then go back to the drawing board. Without a great offer, you cannot achieve great results.

Another thing to consider when coming up with your offer, is the lifetime value of the people who respond to your ad. Taking a smaller profit in the short term will generally work out better in the long run.

Here's some examples of powerful offers ...

- Free haircut - For a hairdressing salon looking to increase its database.
- 2 Steak Dinners and 2 Glasses of Wine for \$10 - Restaurant recruiting members for its VIP Club.
- 1 New Release Video and a Large Pizza for \$6 - Video store promotion to recruit new members.

All of these offers are worthwhile and sure to get a great response. Weak offers will cause your ad to fail. Understand that your offer is the part of your ad that gets your customers to act now, and to buy from you rather than your opposition.

Here's some examples of weak offers ...

- 10% Off - This is not a big enough discount to generate interest.
- Call now for your free colour brochure - So what?
- Buy 9 and get the 10th for 1/2 price - No one would respond to this offer.

Types of offers ...

Here are some possible offers that would be worth considering ...

The Added Value with Soft Dollar Cost ...

Soft Dollar Cost refers to products, services or added extras that you can combine with your standard product to make it more attractive and increase its perceived value, but don't add much if anything to your costs.

For this strategy to be effective the added extra must have a high perceived value, in other words your customers must see the added benefit as being great value.

The Package Offer ...

By packaging products and services together you create a more marketable combination. There is a higher perceived value when products or services are packaged, your customers will want to buy more, simply because of the extra products they get when buying a product they already want.

One of the best examples of a great package is computer equipment. Buy the hardware and receive the software for free. This style of offer is very attractive to potential customers.

Discounts vs. Bonus Offers ...

More often than not discounting will cost you profits. A far better way of clearing stock and generating extra trade is to have a 2 for the price of 1 sale. Or, try a buy one of these and get one of these FREE. The other way of putting this offer is every 10th purchase free, or when you spend \$100, we'll give you \$20 off your next purchase.

Valued at Offer ...

If you are including a free item in your ad, make sure you value them. For example - RING now for your FREE consultation, normally valued at \$75. This positions your time, product, or service much more than a simple free give-away that people won't value or appreciate.

Time Limited Offers ...

Place a time limit on your offer, it will dramatically increase the response rate because it gives people a reason to respond right now. Place urgency in your offer ... For a short time only ... Call before such and such ... Only while stocks last. These will all create a sense of urgency in your consumers mind.

Guarantee Offers ...

Using a guarantee offer is a great way to boost the response to your ad. People will be far more willing to part with their money if you take the risk out of the buying decision. The better the guarantee you make the higher your response will be.

FREE Offers ...

Giving away something absolutely free (*no catches whatsoever*) is often a brilliant way to build a loyal customer base. Offer a "bribe" to get them in the door initially, then great service and products to encourage them to come back. This type of offer can reduce your "cost per lead" dramatically.

Break Even Analysis

Why it's important

It's essential that you work out your costs up front. Otherwise, you'll have no idea what you need to achieve in order for the campaign to be worthwhile. You may find out after doing the analysis that the campaign has so little chance of success, you need to go back to the drawing board altogether.

This analysis is for the whole campaign. After you've worked out your total fixed costs (*for the campaign*), you then work out your profit (*your average dollar sale minus your variable costs*), which gives you enough info to work out how many responses you need in order to break even.

Break Even Analysis

Newsletter Campaign

Hard Costs

Production	\$
Envelopes	\$
Paper	\$
Printing	\$
Postage	\$
Other	\$
1. Total Fixed Costs	\$
2. Average \$\$\$ Sale	\$

Variable Costs

Telephone	\$
Wages	\$
Electricity	\$
Rent	\$
Brochures	\$
Other Postage	\$
Other	\$
3. Total Variables	\$

Delivery Costs

Cost Of Goods Sold	\$
Taxes	\$
Transportation	\$
Packaging	\$
Other	\$
4. Total Delivery	\$
5. Net Profit [2/(3+4)]	\$
6. Response Needed To Break Even (1/5)	\$