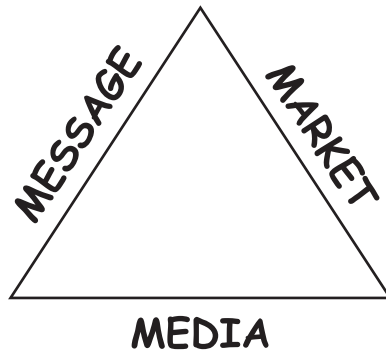


Presenting Your Message



Regardless of the target markets you later select and the modifications you make in your message to fit these markets, and regardless of the media mix you use to deliver the presentation of your message, there are some key ideas to keep in mind about making the right presentation.

The Battle to Communicate

Stew Leonard's famous super-supermarket brought in fresh fish every day, carefully packaged it, and displayed it in the refrigerated cases, clearly and proudly labeled as FRESH FISH. (*Note: Stew Leonard built one of the largest and most unusual supermarkets and was ahead of his time; many other independents and even chains have since copied much of what he pioneered. You can read about it in Tom Peters's book *In Search of Excellence*.*)

Stew Leonard's supermarket had the right message—people who like fish really like fresh fish. Few other supermarkets went to the trouble and expense of bringing in a lot of fresh fish, so the company even had a working USP. It also, incidentally, was getting the right message to the right market; most of Stew Leonard's customers were upscale consumers with the money to buy fresh fish, the time and inclination to prepare a meal with it, and an appreciation for it. Still, something was wrong. It turned out to be a presentation problem.

One of the customers told the people at Stew Leonard's that she wished they had real fresh fish, like the fish at the wharfside fish markets: fish lying there on slabs of ice. So Stew Leonard's people divided the fresh fish that came in each day and presented the same fish two different ways: one, as they had been, cleaned up and nicely packaged; two, unpackaged, on a slab of ice, in a little display unit topped with a sign reading: Fresh Fish Market.

Guess what? Their sales of fresh fish more than doubled. To me, this little story hammers home the idea that it is quite often difficult to communicate successfully.

ULTIMATE MARKETING SECRET WEAPON #2 Being Clearly Understood

Lexus and Infiniti, top-luxury cars, were introduced to the market at about the same time, and because Lexus overwhelmingly outsold Infiniti, Infiniti dealers begged the company and its ad agency to “show 'em the

car” in the TV commercials. Instead, the company insisted on a Zen-ish series of elegant commercials that never showed the car. A bold experiment, but a bad idea nevertheless.

There *are* notable examples of outrageously clever, intensely creative, excitingly innovative marketing campaigns that have worked well, but if you prefer to put the odds in your favor, you’ll pass on this high-risk, long-shot approach and always opt for being clearly understood.

One of the most interesting failure phenomena in advertising is the development of an idea, character, or presentation that is tremendously memorable in itself yet fails to sell the products it represents. Everybody knows about the funny pink bunny with the drum in the battery commercials—but do you know the brand of battery he represents? Surveys show more than half of consumers name the company’s competitor! And in a period of five years, while showing off the bunny every way imaginable, that company’s market share declined rather than improved.

Another great example of such a misfire is the Taco Bell dog of a few years back. The massive, expensive ad campaign featuring the little stuffed dog wound up selling a lot of little stuffed dogs but reportedly did nothing to improve the chain’s market share or sales. The ad campaigns that immediately followed, which refocused attention on the food products, were much more successful.

The confused consumer either does not buy or sometimes buys the wrong product! Bottom line: bend over backward to avoid confusing your customer.

Presentation Key #1: Be Well Organized

The customer has to be led up five steps to a buying or action decision—to return an order form, redeem a coupon, call for an appointment, come into a store, or buy a product or service—and the five steps are the same for any and every product or service, whether you are marketing to consumers or business-to-business:

- STEP 1:** Awareness of need and/or desire
- STEP 2:** Picking the “thing” that fulfills the need/desire
- STEP 3:** Picking the source for the thing
- STEP 4:** Accepting the source’s price/value argument
- STEP 5:** Finding reasons to act now

Sometimes you have to start your presentation at Step 1; other times you get to start on Step 2. A company selling dog food gets to start on Step 2; a company selling dog vitamins has to start on Step 1.

Go back to the Yellow Pages and again turn to the ads in your section. Look at several of them carefully, and ask yourself whether or not, from the top, the headline on down, these ads present their messages according to the organized structure above.

I think you’ll agree with me—most do not. Believe me, this is a big mistake. Every presentation of a marketing message via any and every medium should adhere to a safe, proven, effective structure.

Let me give you a couple of great examples of this structure in action:

Example #1

Some years back I decided to buy a portable fireplace that burns some chemical “logs,” gives off heat, glows, replicates the look and the fragrance of a wood fire, but needs no chimney, is safe, and can be moved from the living room to the bedroom with ease. Before I saw this thing in the Hammacher-Schlemmer catalog, I didn’t even know such a thing existed or that I needed or wanted one. However, seeing it reminded me that in moving from one house to another, we’d given up a fireplace. I couldn’t care less, but my wife at the time really enjoyed the fireplace. (In Phoenix!) So, I instantly became aware of a desire to own a fireplace—in this case, to make my wife happy. I was on Step 1.

I was not about to move to a home with a fireplace, and the home we lived in, which I loved, was not conducive in its design for a built-in,

conventional fireplace, nor did I want to incur the expense and bother of having one built. The idea of a portable fireplace was pretty appealing. Okay, up to Step 2.

I wanted one. Where to get it? I'd never seen one anywhere but in this company's catalog. They made it very easy to get—a toll-free call. They even offered to gift wrap the darned thing, so I could give it to my wife as a present. They would deliver it to my door. And they guaranteed I'd be happy with it. Bingo. Step 3.

In this case, Step 4's virtually a must issue, because my thinking has precluded comparison shopping. (By the way, this thing cost \$499.00.)

Standing on Step 4, though, the sale breaks down. It's only August, and the next gift-giving occasion is Christmas, so I put the catalog in a pile of stuff to look at later in the year, when I start doing my holiday shopping. The company didn't give me a reason, an incentive, or a reward for ordering immediately.

Example #2

For many years, I did a considerable amount of consulting work within the chiropractic profession, helping practitioners learn to market their services effectively. I consider the members of this profession my friends, but I must tell you that they remain stubbornly lousy at marketing. Most of them deviate from this organized structure in most of the media they use, yet they need to follow these five steps as badly as any marketer I can think of.

For them, Step 1 has to be creating awareness of the need or the desire: reminding people that they do suffer chronically from, say, headaches or low back pain or neck stiffness, that they consume frightening quantities of pills, drugs, and alcohol to mute the symptoms, and that deep down inside they desire optimum health and fitness. Chiropractors *cannot* afford to assume that the public is instantly, automatically interested in this.

ULTIMATE MARKETING SECRET WEAPON #3 Carefully and Thoroughly Eliminate All Assumptions

Step 2, then, taken only after Step 1, is to present chiropractic care as a viable, effective, accepted, credible, safe, gentle, nonsurgical, nondrug alternative treatment for various problems and ailments. Step 3, taken only after Steps 1 and 2, is the individual chiropractor presenting his USP-empowered marketing message and offer.

Step 4 is handling the issues of fees, costs, and affordability. Here we have taught chiropractors to be creative in offering to accept every imaginable insurance plan, handle all the paperwork, accept major credit cards, even offer installment financing services through finance companies.

Step 5, finally, is pushing the prospective patient over the edge, so he or she picks up the phone right now, calls, makes an appointment, and keeps it.

Fail to walk the customer up those steps, in that order, and you act at your peril.

Presentation Key #2: Ignite Interest

Please—I don't care if you are marketing Hostess Twinkies, garden hoses, industrial widgets, or any one of a zillion commodities or services that you and everyone you know has accepted as dull and ordinary and mundane, maybe even trivial—there is a way, and you *must* find it, to present that message in a truly interesting way.

ULTIMATE MARKETING SIN #1 Being Boring

Some years back, I did some consulting work for a manufacturer of security cameras and video monitoring devices for retail stores. I'm here to tell you that there's nothing inherently fascinating about this.

Still, I knew that I had to *ignite interest* in the storeowner's mind and heart, intellectually and emotionally. I invented a giveaway booklet with this obviously provocative title:

HOW TO STEAL YOUR BOSS BLIND!

Believe me, when a storeowner sees this book, his interest *is* ignited. He eagerly, passionately wants to know what is in the book. Just as an aside, the word “secret” evokes a powerful emotional response in most people. It instantly hits our curiosity button. For some reason, just as cats are bothered by closed doors, we are driven nuts by secrets. We want to know. You can ignite interest easily if you have secrets to divulge.

Consider this: Would you be interested, or do you know somebody who would be interested, in knowing a medical doctor's secret for absolutely, positively suppressing hunger so you can diet, or even skip meals or fast with no hunger pains, no desire for food? If I told you that this doctor's secret had been tested and proven on 10,000 patients, would that make it even more interesting to you?

If at all possible, you should find ways to add drama to your presentations. I've done a lot of scriptwriting and consulting work in the TV infomercial business—you know, those thirty-minute-long commercials that look like TV shows—and, though I haven't worked on them myself, I particularly admire the kind that feature dramatic demonstrations. Maybe you remember one of the classics, in the *Amazing Discoveries* series of infomercials, this one selling car polish, in which they set fire to the hood of the car and poured acid on it! Or Ron Popeil's Food Dehydrator. Or the vacuum cleaner with suction so strong it can pick up a bowling ball. I've had to work on much more difficult infomercials, often featuring interviews and conversations. When the product can be the star, it's an advantage.

You can make the presentation of your marketing message more interesting in many different ways, some depending on the medium being used, including:

1. Before/after photographs
2. Dramatic stories of satisfied customers
3. Shocking statistics
4. Dramatic slogans, headlines, statements
5. Physical demonstration

Often, it pays to go to extremes to capture attention and ignite interest. As an example, consider Gold/VIP Member Mitch Carson's work with the Coughlin Group's opening of its new West Coast office. The challenge: establish presence in a new market, where the company was not known, as quickly and efficiently as possible, and immediately generate good sales appointments. Mitch is the leading expert in what I call "object mail": the use of objects in direct mail to ignite interest and response. Working closely with Coughlin's West Coast VP, Kelly Pagett, he created a multistep direct-mail campaign delivered to carefully selected prospects. Letters asking for appointments to provide free risk analysis and discuss fire insurance were sent with:

- A sand pail and shovel
- Toy airplanes
- Rubber duckies
- And finally, boxes of matches

A gift with an appointment, a set of BBQ tools, was also offered. The result: a terrific 46 percent appointment rate!

Resource!

You can actually see an example from this campaign in the free 12-week Ultimate Marketing Plan Course delivered by e-mail. Sign up at www.UltimateMarketingPlan.com. And you can get a lot more information from Mitch at www.impactproducts.net.

Presentation Key #3: Ask for Action

Most marketing-message presentations are too wimpy. They stop short of demanding any action. “Here’s our beautiful new car”—but they stop short of: get into a showroom this weekend, take a test drive, and take home a free case of Coke just for test-driving it. “Here’s our wonderful new shampoo”—but they stop short of: now go to your phone, dial our toll-free number, and we’ll rush you a free sample and \$5.00 in discount coupons.

ULTIMATE MARKETING SECRET WEAPON #4 The Guts to Ask for Action Every Time, in Every Presentation

Very early in my selling career, I heard Zig Ziglar say that the difference between being a professional salesperson and a professional visitor is asking for the order. Zig also said: “Timid salespeople have skinny kids.” (In case you don’t know this already, Zig Ziglar is one of the best-known, most popular motivational speakers and sales trainers in America. His books include *See You at the Top* and *Secrets of Closing the Sale*. For nine consecutive years, I appeared with Zig Ziglar at SUCCESS events in twenty to thirty cities each year, typically addressing audiences of 10,000 to 30,000 people.)

Fortunately, I have always accepted Zig’s idea and have never, ever been shy about asking for the action. However, most salespeople, even otherwise very good ones, are held back by this hesitancy, hobbled by some strange love of subtlety.

I spent a full week touring one company’s real estate developments, pretending to be a prospective buyer, putting the salespeople through their paces. Almost without exception, all the salespeople did a fine job of establishing rapport, being courteous and friendly, asking smart questions, showing me the communities and the houses. And, almost unanimously, they all stopped way short of asking me to buy.

Four chiropractors joined together and manned a very attractive, professional-appearing booth at a health fair in a busy shopping mall over Labor Day weekend but wound up with no new patients from their efforts. Care to know why? They never asked anybody to book an exam appointment. They smiled, greeted, handed out literature, gave scoliosis exams, checked blood pressure, and answered questions, but they never asked anybody to take any action.

Bill Glazer never fails to ask for action—and he asks a lot. Exhibit #3 is the last page of a mailer sent to his retail stores' customers. Note how many times he asks for action—I've numbered them by hand for you. Six times on one page! This is the way to do it. (To see a copy of this complete mailing, enroll in the free 12-Week Ultimate Marketing Plan Course delivered by e-mail, at www.UltimateMarketingPlan.com.)

Again, check the ads in the Yellow Pages. Also look at the ads in a newspaper or the trade magazine related to your business. Isn't it amazing how many stop short of asking you to take any specific action, or, if they do, offer no really good reason, incentive, or reward for doing as they ask? Wimpy. Wimpy. Wimpy.

Touch Every Base Every Time

You don't have to be a baseball fan to know this rule or, if you prefer, tradition: even when the hitter whacks the ball out of the ballpark and into outer space, it's not a home run on the scoreboard until he goes around the bases—and touches every one. In gym class baseball I was tagged out after hitting a home run and walking the bases but carelessly stepping over second base instead of on it. I've never forgotten that. **The right presentation of the right marketing message touches every base, every time. It assumes nothing. It takes nothing for granted.** It strives for clarity and simplicity and even, many times, brevity—but never, ever achieves those things through shortcuts or skipping bases.

... Presenting Your Message ...

Exhibit #3

Listen: If you can't attend during the 4-days mentioned above, you can still come into either store on Monday, July 5th or Tuesday, July 6th and enter our gift certificate drawing. Either way...

①

YOU'LL GET SOME INCREDIBLE BARGAINS
(Just Take A Look At The Sheet Enclosed)

WARNING: If you plan to buy new clothes anytime this year, you owe it to yourself to attend and take advantage of this special preferred client only offer. Take good care of this letter and we'll look forward to seeing you sometime Thursday through Sunday. ②

Sincerely,

Bill Glazer

Bill Glazer
Owner

③

④

Present This Letter and Receive a...

SURPRISE FREE GIFT



With this letter. Valid July 1-4, 2004 only.
While supplies last.

SKU# 33-610

P.S. **DON'T FORGET:** This special savings event is good for 4-DAYS ONLY, this coming Thursday through Sunday (both stores open Sunday, July 4th from 11am-5pm).

PLUS, THIS LETTER ENTITLES YOU TO:

- A surprise FREE gift
- Automatically enters you in our drawing for a chance to win a \$250 GAGE GIFT CERTIFICATE. (Gage "World Class" Menswear employees are not eligible to win Gift Certificate contest. No purchase is necessary. You need not be present to win.)
- An EXTRA 10% OFF your purchases even on our 'Rock Bottom' Final Reductions merchandise when you present this letter between July 1-4, 2004


⑤

**BRING A FRIEND
IF YOU WISH!**

Present This Letter and Receive an...

EXTRA 10% Off

All Final Reduction Merchandise



With this letter. Valid July 1-4, 2004 only.
Not valid with any other offer.

SKU# 33-609

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Which Media Should You Use to Present Your Message?

The list of possible media you might use to present your message is long—from Yellow Pages ads to imprinted snow-scrapers to TV infomercials. There are two fundamental truths about all media. First, while different products, services, businesses, and professions will rank media differently in terms of productivity, efficiency, and appropriateness, you should never unnecessarily or arbitrarily limit your options. You should use all that you can make work. Second, success principles, such as those governing effective presentation of messages, do not change from one medium to the next. A lot of people think they do and act as if they do, but they do not.

There *is* one medium every business should use, and every marketer should learn to use successfully. That is direct mail. That is the subject of the companion to this book, *The Ultimate Sales Letter*, and I urge you to get it, read it, and use it. The sales letter is the most reliable, dependable, practical marketing tool for anyone and everyone. And, to give you one important tip about it right here: of all the direct-mail formats you can choose from, a personalized letter—what we call “A-pile mail”—is the most reliable.

Resource!

The leader in personalized mailings and personalized mailing services is Think Ink, and you can request information from them by faxing 714-374-7071 or calling 714-374-7080. You also can enroll free in my 12-Week Ultimate Sales Letter Course, delivered by e-mail, at www.Ultimate-Sales-Letter.com.
