Marketing Copywriters: Be Believable Or Be Gone

By Alan L Tarr

Author of The 7 Deadly Sins Of Marketing and
Win The Marketing Game And Stop Wasting Money!

Using the wrong words or numbers can turn your readers from "on" to "off" in a second.

As consumers, we have all been bombarded with meaningless claims such as "The Most Gigantic Sale In Our History" or "The Best For Less" or "The Rolls Royce Of Whatever-It-Is-We're-Selling!" Our BS meters are always engaged when looking at advertising.

These types of meaningless claims arouse our suspicions because they are far too general and subjective. Buyers want promises but they want them to have teeth. The teeth come from being specific. What sounds better to you, "The Most Gigantic Sales In Our History" or "Our Biggest Sale In 7 Years. Save 32 – 61% on brands you love"?

The specificity of the latter claim supplies "believability". Promises or claims that are believable are acted on far more often than puffery, platitudes and clichés.

Equally damaging to consumer response are numbers that no one takes seriously such as, "The #1 Store Of Its Kind In The Metroplex", "50% less than competing brands", "5-Star Service" or 1,000 Items To Choose From".

Stop the bombast and get real! Try the following:

- "Rated #1 in the _____ survey."
- "Our customers rate our service 4.88 out of 5 stars. (Awesome!)"
- "1,064 items in stock everyday!"
- "Save 34% on all Fishing Reels Tomorrow!"

Starting to get the picture? Numbers are believable when they are perceived to be real. Stay away from round numbers like 50% or $10,000. Prospects perceive the round numbers as hype and ignore it. What's more, they ignore you.

Use actual numbers. It's far easier to believe a 48% discount than a 50% discount, or a rebate of $10,437 than one of $10,000. Why? Because you took the time and trouble to be specific and that shows you respect your audience. One caution though. Be prepared to back up your claim with facts – which should be fairly easy since you're using "real numbers".

# # #