

**12 Pointers for Writing Attention-
Getting Headlines
and
A Baker's Dozen of Fill-in-the-Blank
Templates You Can Use Right Away**



With a scant 1-3 seconds to catch a prospect's attention, your goal is to do so long enough for your prospect to decide to continue reading all of your content – not just some of it.

Your first step in achieving that objective is to have a magnetic headline – one that compels your reader to go onto the first sentence seeking more.

As advertising guru David Ogilvy said:

"On the average, 5 times as many people read the headlines as read the body copy."

So how do you create a killer headline?

One way is to focus on the single strongest benefit you can offer your prospects (aka the USP - unique selling proposition), but here are a dozen other pointers to consider:

1. Ask a question in the headline. A classic headline used for a promotion for *Psychology Today* was *"Do you close the bathroom door even when you're the only one home?"*

2. Give news using words such as "introducing," "announcing" or "new."

"Announcing 10 remarkable ways to stay in shape without exercising daily."

3. Address your prospects' concerns. I call it pushing their buttons so when they read, they think "yeah, I need/want this. I gotta have it." For instance:

"Facing foreclosure? Here are 3 questions to ask your lender before they take your home away from you."

4. Promise something wonderful, but do not lie. You'll lose more customers than you gain that way (bad news travels fast).

"For deep-clean, oil-free skin, Noxzema has the solution."

5. Be specific. This well-known Rolls Royce headline did the job: *"At 60 miles an hour, the loudest noise in this new Rolls Royce comes from the electric clock."*

6. Give the reader a command - tell him/her to do something.

"Go ahead, throw away this free offer."

7. Promise your prospects helpful/useful information.

"How to avoid foreclosure," or "4 tips for losing weight without feeling starved for your favorite foods."

8. Promise to reveal a secret(s).

"Discover the secret to writing thought-provoking, compelling copy," or "7 secrets to a Web site that gets results."

9. Give your prospects good news.

"You're never too old to be in great shape."

10. Target a particular type of reader.

"Do you aspire to write children's books?"

11. Tie in to current events. The most well-known example of this is the

"Official car (camera, airline, beverage, etc.) of the Olympics."

12. Highlight your guarantee.

"Lose 10 pounds in 10 days or your money back."

Get the picture?

As my mentor, and veteran direct response copywriter, the late Gene Schwartz, said:

"Your headline has only one job – to stop your prospect and compel him or her to read the second sentence of your ad."

Now, if you need some assistance, turn the page for a list of fill-in-the-blank headline templates you can use to create your next headline.

Bonus: A Baker's Dozen of Headline Templates You Can Use – Just Fill in the Blanks

1. Introducing 5 tips to _____ without _____.

Example: *"Introducing 5 tips to shed those pounds without giving up the foods you love."*

2. With _____ can you afford to/not to _____?

Example: *"With almost 1 billion users on Facebook, can you afford not to have a Fan Page for your business?"* or *"With 1 in 2 people getting osteoarthritis in their lifetime, can you afford to ignore your joints?"*

3. 10 things your _____ won't tell you about _____, even if you asked.

Example: *"10 things your doctor won't tell you about weight loss, even if you asked."*

4. 3 secrets _____ don't want you to know about.

Example: *"3 little secrets your boyfriend doesn't want you to know about and how to get him to spill the beans."*

5. 5 biggest mistakes _____ make and how to avoid them.

Example: *"5 biggest mistakes investors make and how to avoid them."*

6. 3 reasons _____ don't work.

Example: *"3 reasons diets don't work."*

7. How to _____ in <insert #> days/weeks/months.

Example: *"Lose 10 pounds in 10 days without dieting."*

8. 5 shocking things I discovered about _____.

Example: *"5 shocking things I learned about investing in the stock market."*

9. How to _____ to the next level of success.

Example: *“How to take your blog to the next level of success.”*

10. Debunking 4 leading myths about _____.

Example: *“Debunking 4 leading myths about search engine optimization.”*

11. Discover the number 1 secret to _____.

Example: *“Discover the number 1 secret to communicating your passion, attracting more clients and making a difference in their lives.”*

12. What to do when you and your _____ disagree about _____.

Example: *“What to do when you and your doctor disagree about your care.”*

13. An easy-to-follow 5-step formula for _____.

Example: *“An easy-to-follow 5-step formula for writing copy that captivates, compels and converts your prospects into loyal, raving fans.”*

14. Beating the _____ blues. How to feel good about _____ once and for all.

Example: *“Beating the diet blues. How to feel good about your weight once and for all.”* Or, *“Beating the romance blues. How to find your ideal mate once and for all.”*

I know, 14 is a tad more than a baker's dozen, but I'm guessing that's okay with you.

So, are your prospects reading your headlines?

What's the best one you've used to catch their attention successfully? Let me know at debra@writedirection.com and when I've gathered enough "winners," I'll be happy to share them on my blog.

About the author:



A recipient of the Rocky Mountain Direct Marketing Association's (RMDMA) "Creative Person of the Year Award," Debra Jason started The Write Direction in 1989. Past President of the RMDMA, she is a seasoned copywriter with more than 25 years of experience in the field of direct marketing. Since then she has personally written thousands upon thousands of words for hundreds of clients around the country (and some overseas).

When other writers have researched books on freelance writing and direct mail copy, they've turned to Debra for her input. She has been quoted in:

- *The Complete Guide to Writing Web-Based Advertising Copy to Get the Sale* by Vickie Taylor
- *Second Lives: Becoming a Freelance Writer* by Bill Harris
- *Modern Media Writing* by Rick Wilber & Randy Miller
- *Smart Business Solutions: Direct Marketing & Customer Management* by Douglas Gantenbein
- *Copywriting Success* by Darren Andrews.

In 2012, after 10 years living in paradise on Kauai, HI, Debra returned to Boulder, CO where she first started her business. As a professional copywriter, she empowers creative solopreneurs, passion-driven coaches and enthusiastic business professionals to communicate their marketing message in a way that captivates and converts their prospects into loyal customers - *even if they have been struggling with how to transform their ideas into words in the past. This way they reach a broader audience and generate more income so that they can live the freedom lifestyle they've dreamed about, which is why they went into business for themselves to begin with.*

As a speaker, she provides you with the power tools that get results when you're seeking to gain exposure and build your business. In addition to being a featured guest on online programs she has presented numerous live workshops on marketing, social media and copywriting. Growing in popularity are her programs, "Millionaire Marketing on a Shoestring Budget™," "Pushing Your Prospects' Buttons: A 5-Step Copywriting Formula," and "Unleashing the Power of LinkedIn."

She treasures time with family and friends, loves dancing, yoga, the serenity of the ocean, and memories of walking her beautiful (and famous) golden retriever, Ike, along the white sand beaches of the incredible north shore of Kaua'i.

Marketing and writing with heart, not hype.

If you're seeking a dynamic speaker for your organization or event, Debra speaks on the topics of copywriting, marketing, and social media marketing.

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