

# Guest Feature

## Move Your Prospect to Buy Faster With EMPATHY!

**EMPATHY:** *Imaginative projection of one's own consciousness into another being.*  
– Webster's New International Dictionary

Beginning marketers (and that goes for info marketers as well) somehow think their product or service is the most important aspect of their business. Actually the most vital cog in the marketing machine is your PROSPECT.

And according to Master Marketer Jay Abraham, in the beginning your prospect is really not a prospect (yet) – no, he is “suspect.” You see, deep down your prospect knows you want to separate him from his money – so he’s on guard.

So what is the best way to bond, to reach him on a deeper level, to move your prospect to take action with your offer?

Well, one strategy is to create a Core Buying Complex of what your prospect is really all about.

According to my mentor, master copywriter/marketer Mark Ford, a core complex will tell you A LOT about your customer and what keeps him up at night. It’s a matter of identifying three important attributes of your prospect:

**Beliefs:** What do your prospects hold near and dear to their hearts? (Used a lot in fundraising and political contribution campaigns)

**Feelings:** What are their feelings, what really hits them in the gut?

**Desires:** What do they really, really want? (seen in car commercials, niche markets etc.)

Once you take these three elements and combine them, you can create a picture of your prospect’s buying attitude.

Armed with this knowledge, how do you use the Core Buying Complex to move him into a buying mood?

You use empathy.

Through the power of words that correctly convey empathy, you can bond even quicker and faster with your prospect – when you know his “language!”

After your prospect has read your promotion’s headline (or email subject lines) – he



is now piqued with interest (realizing what’s in it for him). Now, they are on to the second most important part of your letter/offer – your lead.

This is where you have to get them hooked, start hitting hot buttons (from their Core Buying Complex) and make them your ally up front.

So when the time comes – and the offer is made – they immediately respond to your call-to-action. One potent power play to accomplish this is with empathy.

Please note: To practice empathy is not to feel for another person, but to actually be another person. When you effectively use empathy

# NO BS. Copywriting

BY PETER J. FOGEL

in a sales letter, (e-mail, direct mail, landing page) you’ve created a kinship, a bond, or connection with your prospect. If your product or service is what the customer wants, then he probably wants to do business with you.

Of course, you have to prove you’re trustworthy and present him with strong evidence that you’ll solve his problem. Remember: *People buy for emotional reasons and justify their purchase with logic.*

## How to Apply Empathy

### No.1 – THE STORY

Stories have been around since the dawn of time. They draw us to the person weaving the tale, inviting us to put ourselves in the protagonist’s shoes. An excellent example is the classic “Two Young Men” letter for the *Wall Street Journal*. Since it began running in 1974, it has produced more than \$1 billion in sales. It starts

*Dear Reader,*

*“On a beautiful late spring afternoon, twenty-five years ago, two young men graduated from the same college. They were very much alike, these two young men...”*

The copywriter, Martin Conroy, goes on to tell how these two young men, childhood friends, start out on their journey through life on similar paths. But something happened that changed their destinations. Both landed at the same company. One friend ran a small department at this company. His buddy ended up president of the company.

How did two men with the same backgrounds end up so differently? For the copywriter, and thus the reader, it’s simple. The friend who became the president subscribed to the



*Wall Street Journal* (although the letter never says so directly) and since everyone craves success, this strategy builds empathy for the less successful friend along with the hope of becoming the more successful man.

Master Copywriter Michael Masterson has come up with three other ways to show empathy that can be used quite effectively in your next direct mail piece. The first, which is our second application is:

#### No. 2 – “I’M NO BETTER THAN YOU ARE”

The copy voice is the first person and uses insecurity or minor weaknesses. It’s used all the time for self-improvement courses, weight reduction and home-based business offers.

I used it in a home-study course – a man is telling the reader how he found wealth and self worth from his new career, but it hadn’t always been like that for him. You see, before that, he was stuck in a dead-end business.

*“I was ‘existing’ as a cabinet-maker. It was a grind. I was inhaling fumes and chemicals, and my back was killing me. Last year in the business I made \$12,245.00...”*

The “I’m just like you” empathy shows that the letter’s author is a real human being with problems and insecurities – ones just like the reader might be experiencing, too. It also puts the prospect in a superior position. The author has opened up, and the prospect now feels closer to him. Next on Michael’s list is:

#### No. 3 – “WE BOTH HAVE THE SAME ENEMY”

Philip’s Publishing’s alternative medicine white paper “Medically Proven Miracles of Healing” uses this type of empathy. The voice is of a rebel doctor who’s fed up with his own medical establishment:

*ENDANGERED ANTIDOTES... “29 safe, clinically proven cures “threatened” by the health care establishment. As far as the FDA and organized medicines are concerned, these near-miraculous curses don’t exist, dear friend. Why? Because if you used these cures, you’d never poison your body with their toxic chemicals. Or let them “prescribe” senseless surgery! And they’d lose billions of dollars – all because you’re too darn smart... and too darn healthy.”*

The headline and lead tells the readers what they might have known all along: Some doctors use surgery to make big bucks, and the FDA continues to kiss the butt of the “big bad wolf drug companies.” Not this doctor, though.

He is a true champion of the little guy... you, his reader.

Rounding out Michael’s list is:

#### No. 4 – JOIN THE CLUB

No one wants to be an outsider, and everyone want to be a member of the club. (eg. American Express) When someone tells you that you’re of a certain class and intelligence, and that not everyone is allowed to get their card or be a member of the “Club,” people want to join. Human nature, since the beginning of time, will always be the same. People (prospects) will always want what they can’t have. And we so desperately want to be a part of, or relate to a group.

*“TROUT SPOKEN HERE.*

*Also Bass. Salmon. And Bonefish*

*Dear Fellow Angler,*

*There’s bait casting. There’s fishing. And then there’s fly fishing...what Robert Traver, author of Anatomy of a Murder, best known to fishermen for his love of trout, called “one of the more amiable forms of incurable madness... I’m the editor of FLY FISHERMAN. Like Robert Traver, I fish because...”*

Right off the bat, the writer lures the prospect in with “his” language. If you’re an angler, you’re thinking, “This guy knows there’s nothing on earth that compares to catching some trout. He’s okay in my book.” Like bait, this writer dangles “fly fisherman” benefits throughout the copy that work beautifully.

Last but not certainly least, and one of my favorite ways to apply empathy is with...

#### No. 5 – HUMOR

Humor is tricky in direct response if your audience does NOT know you yet. The truth? If you have a sarcastic bent of taking on the establishment – and you like blasting BIG BROTHER, BIG GOVERNMENT, BIG PHARMA... and you “mine” the absurdity or irony of how they work – and your audience responds, then by all means go for it!

Naturally, it helps if you are funny. (NOT think you’re funny! You know you’re funny.) Again, your audience will tell you if your sarcastic slightly humorous anecdote is working or not.

Remember: When sending your offer to a

cold list who doesn’t know you (yet) the Direct Response gods will probably frown upon this technique; humor is a tricky thing among strangers and doesn’t always get a good response.

But there are exceptions to every rule. Humor shouldn’t be used to show how witty a copywriter/marketer you are. (Please leave that for the Madison Ave. agencies!) Instead, a good use of humor is where you grab your prospect’s attention while at the same time focusing on his needs.

Marketer Jeff Paul used humor very successfully in his sales piece found on the back of many business opportunity magazines. The ad’s headline was:

*“How I Earn \$4,000 a Day Sitting at My Kitchen Table In My Underwear!”*

The headline stops you with its funny word picture. But it goes deeper. You want to know more about how this guy makes \$4,000 a day, while never leaving home. This version of the “Lazy Man’s Way to Riches” headline targets its blue-collar audience perfectly.

Paul also places strategic, sarcastic remarks about his former employer (something everyone thinks about, but Paul says it for him) in the copy. Remember: Always fit the right humor to the right product or service.

#### Final Thoughts

Mix and match different types of empathy for the most effective message. As master marketer Denny Hatch says, “Copywriters are scared to be emotional. I used to love emotional efforts. Now they are rational.” So there you have it.

TAKE AWAY: Again, know your prospect’s core buying complex – then use empathy (applying passions and emotions he relates to) to connect with him on a deeper level. Solve his problems in a such a way that he knows you truly understand him. When you do this, you’ll leave your competition in the dust and boost your direct response conversions.

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