

INSIDE Direct Mail

Your monthly resource for direct mail trends, tips and analysis

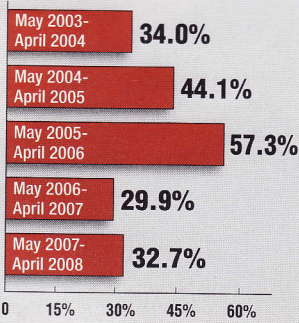
JULY 2008

Associations Integrate Channels

While the amount of mail coming from these groups is on the small side, the overall strategy and tactical execution is not lacking, including sudden booms

... page 18

% of repeat mail from associations



Penn-Environment Goes Local

... and more "Top Mailings," including United Farm Workers, Veer and St. Joseph's Indian School ... page 5

Twelve steps our state's leaders can take today to reduce our global warming emissions

1. Set a goal for greenhouse gas emissions...
2. Develop a plan to reduce emissions...
3. Invest in energy efficiency...
4. Promote public transit...
5. Encourage carpooling...
6. Support green buildings...
7. Encourage green purchasing...
8. Promote green landscaping...
9. Encourage green education...
10. Promote green tourism...
11. Encourage green entertainment...
12. Encourage green transportation...

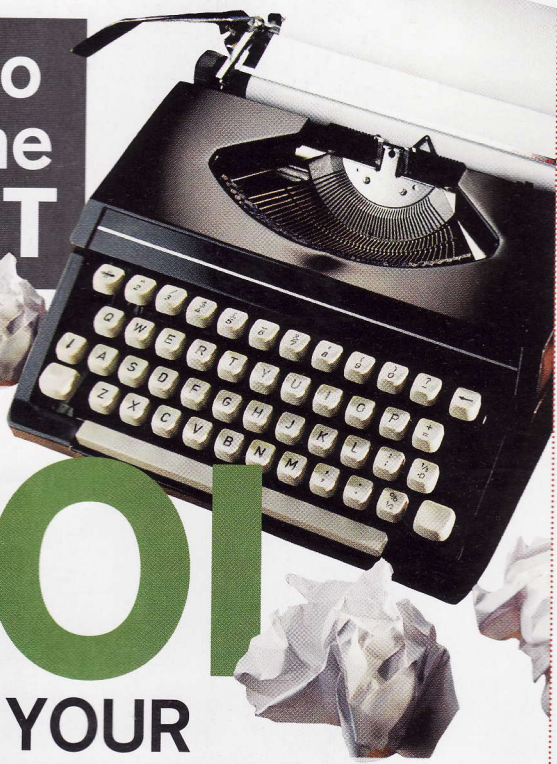
How to Get the BEST

ROI FROM YOUR COPYWRITER

DURING RECESSIONARY TIMES

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That, in a nutshell, is the symbiotic relationship between a copywriter and direct marketer during the best of times. Needless to say, it's even more important to have such a relationship during the worst of times. With us headed full tilt into a recession, it's the time when we truly have to help each other ... page 12



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Anatomy of a Control

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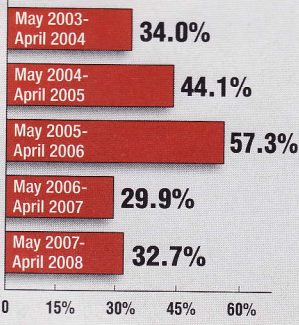
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10. Encourage green purchasing...
11. Support green infrastructure...
12. Encourage green education...

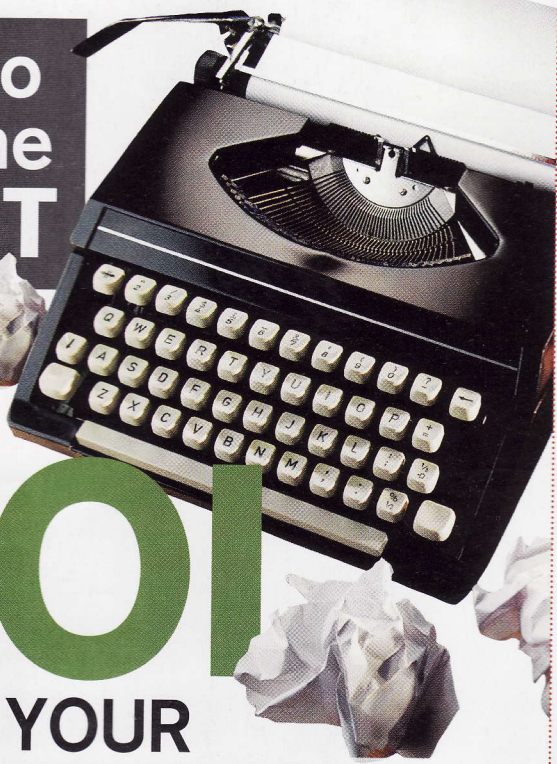
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How to Get the Best ROI From Your Copywriter During Recessionary Times

When the economy struggles, direct marketers must learn how to improve their relationships with their copywriters, to the great benefit of both ... and the bottom line

by Peter J. Fogel

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If you want the best ROI from your copywriter during challenging economic times, then you should, pardon the pun, be "on the same page" when it comes to working effectively together.

Hire the Right Pen for the Job, and for the Right Price

Are you interested in saving lots of money and getting a poor response on your next mail drop? Then by all means, shop around the same way you search for an inexpensive muffler and hire a bottom-tier copywriter. Later on, of course, you may have to hire an "A" copywriter for more money, after the initial test fails miserably to resuscitate the patient (the sales piece).

Common sense dictates hiring a copywriter with a proven track record in your particular niche who can not only write sizzling copy that moves your prospect to action, but who also resonates with great ideas and enthusiasm. Getting a great letter from the copywriter, for example, is fundamental for direct mail success, but most seasoned copywriters have more to offer than great letter copy.

Many, in fact, can assist you with an effective marketing plan. No better time to tap this fountain of marketing knowledge than during a recession; indeed, now is precisely when you should be building a future relationship with your copywriter for bigger profits.

So what can a marketer who is extremely budget-conscious do during a soft economy? Well, one solution might be to work out a deal where the copywriter possibly takes a lower up-front fee (than he usually gets), but a larger back end with royalties after the initial test. (For example, instead of receiving 2 cents a mailing, perhaps go with 3 cents).

That makes your copywriter not just a "gun for hire," but your partner in making the campaign a huge success.

Consider These Marketing Ideas

Challenging economic times call for controlled risk and calculated action, but they do not call for a halt in your marketing plans (leave that to your fearful competitor). Rather, you should go the opposite direction and ramp it up. Here are some thoughts to consider with your copywriter:

- Especially now with rising mailing costs, perhaps it's time to use a different delivery system: self-mailer, #10, tabloid, slim jim, etc.
- Are you looking for a home run with your initial campaign? We both know that the money is in the list. Would you be happy breaking even (with your initial run), knowing that you are collecting strong names for a back end?
- What strategies work best in a soft economy? According to copywriter Bob Bly, use a combination of result-getting direct marketing, such as targeted e-mail marketing, free content offers, sales

letter, self-mailers, postcard decks and special discount offers.

- You should also seriously consider taking your offline marketing and putting it online.
- Employ low-cost and no-cost visibility-enhancing publicity techniques, which include press releases, speeches, booklets, articles, newsletters, blogs, etc.

What to avoid like the plague? Madison Ave. image-building marketing that includes large space ads, corporate brochures, expensive annual reports, etc. Remember, if you can't measure the results, then lose it.

Below are ideas you should discuss with your copywriters. You can:

- Provide the best premium(s) that will help move your prospect to buy your product or service—without giving away the store.
- Give your copywriter the freedom to come up with a "no-brainer" offer that your prospect just can't refuse.
- Show your copywriter the numbers! Share with him how the last package performed, such as revenue over cost, percent response, etc.
- Give your copywriter all the product specs; whitepapers; client testimonials; as well as your past, present and competitors' controls. The more she has in her hands to examine and mull over, the better for the end product.
- If you're a marketer of alternative health products, provide all the research (that your legal department will allow) to your copywriter. This is an important, often overlooked point: In the perfect world, your copywriter should spend his or her time writing—not researching.
- Brainstorm with your copywriter to come

When a campaign takes off like gangbusters, everyone slaps each other on the back, whips out the brandy and hands out cigars. BUT, if it fails, then there are some hard questions to consider.

up with an insatiable USP as well as how to deliver the best “bang for the prospect’s buck.” (Contrary to popular belief, prospects might not mind paying a higher price during this time for your widget—they just want to know they’re getting value.)

- Provide access to the proper experts (e.g., editor of a financial newsletter) who stand behind your product and can help your copywriter sell it.

Whose Copy Is It?

In trying to get the best ROI from your copywriter, this question is essential to pose. Are you a hands-on marketer who really understands the nuances of copy? Are you copy chiefing the project yourself?

If so, please know this: When a campaign takes off like gangbusters, everyone slaps each other on the back, whips out the brandy and hands out cigars. But, if it fails, then there are some hard questions to consider during your postmortem:

- Was the copy rewritten by “commit-

tee,” where the lead, the tone, even the headline was changed?

- If the legal department butchered it, was the copywriter’s version so watered down that you needed “CSI” forensic experts to figure out who really wrote it?
- Was it sent to a house list that was so beaten up, like a washed-up prize fighter, that it was useless?
- Did the graphic designer come onto the project well after the copywriter left the premises?
- Was your project manager in charge of your mail campaign not doing his job and choosing incorrect lists?

If you answered “yes” to any of those questions, then please pause and figure out why the campaign failed before you shoot the messenger (your copywriter) and tell

him “his” package bombed—when, in fact, the group effort might have been the cause for “our” package not doing well.

Remember: Business is cyclical, and the economy is no different. It will recover—typically recessions last on average around 12 months—and you will go on to greater profits. Working with the right copywriter in a succinct manner will enable it to happen a lot quicker.

Once you do, just remember what Humphrey Bogart said to Claude Rains in “Casablanca”: “This could be the beginning of a beautiful relationship.” **IDM**

Peter J. Fogel is a freelance copywriter who specializes in direct mail, web and radio copy. His clients include Agora Publishing, RightSide Investors and Bio-Centric Health. His website is www.peterfogel.com and e-mail is compellingcopy2005@yahoo.com.

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