

with columnist Robert Ciccone



# Five golden rules cinch product sales

*Motivate buyers with fear, greed, guilt, exclusivity and approval*

**H**ow is it possible that many people with less intelligence, ability and ambition consistently achieve more than you do?

Keep reading for the surprising results from a Harvard experiment that shows you how to perform better... with less effort — and, achieve your goals... faster!

Are you hooked? I know I am.

Now, this article has nothing to do with the Harvard experiment mentioned. I am using these two lines, which I found as “teaser” copy from an ad promoting a self-development program, to illustrate the importance

of getting your message noticed, and how to motivate people to action in response to your advertising and promotions.

The first line is designed to grab you. The next one is designed to propel you forward. How? Because they make superb use of the Five Prime Motivators, which are, according to direct marketing guru Herschell Gordon Lewis: Fear, Greed, Guilt, Exclusivity and Approval.

The beauty of the two lines is that they make direct use of the first four motivators, and indirect use of the fifth. That makes them a rare piece of copy, indeed. Here’s how they do it,

in descending order of emphasis:

**Guilt** – Who hasn’t felt at some time that they weren’t doing all they could to achieve the kind of success they want in life? Have any of you fully tapped your potential?

**Exclusivity** – You’re being told you’re smarter than those who are making it – others who are less intelligent, able and ambitious than you.

**Greed** – If only you could achieve according to your potential, you could have all that success brings – all that those other, less capable people have.

**Fear** – You’re losing out. If you don’t do something soon, you’ll never have success. You’ll be a failure!

It’s a golden rule in direct marketing that if you pose a problem, you must also show that you have the answer, which is what the second line of copy does (“Keep reading for the surprising results...”).

Implicit in the copy is the idea that once you start fulfilling your potential, you will boost your self-esteem and enjoy the approval of others.

In light of the Five Prime Motivators, think about why some advertising messages work and some don’t.

When you are trying to motivate someone to do something right now – whether to buy, or simply let them know you are interested – clever headlines, smart copy and arresting images don’t work nearly so well as insightful and appropriate use of one or more of Lewis’s five motivators.

I recently read some research that every day we are exposed to 1,600 advertising messages. What “exposed to” includes is every ad that comes on TV while we are watching, every billboard we pass, every ad in every newspaper or magazine we pick up, and every ad we hear on the radio. It is the equivalent of watch-

ing over 12 solid hours of commercials daily.

Mercifully, we pay little attention to most marketing messages. Scarcely 10 percent even enters our awareness, and only a small fraction of that ever prompts us to go out and buy.

So, how do you get people’s attention? There are many different ideas about why people respond to advertising. Some think type and layout are important. Some think it is the type of media or medium used. Others say brands and compelling images do the job. Once in a while some out-of-the-loop marketer claims, “Sex sells!” Believe me, it doesn’t, unless sex (or something closely related to it) is what you are selling.

Making your ad stand out is a tough job. If you are trying to promote or maintain awareness of your brand, then clever headlines and arresting images may work; they may help you retain top-of-mind with consumers. But if you want people to act, you must motivate them.

Let me ask you: How do you feel about your current advertising and marketing? Are your messages as strong, motivating and action-inducing as they could be?

Savvy marketers know that an irresistible offer backed by strong copy using one or one or more motivators is what *really* sells in advertising.

*Robert Ciccone is the president and founder of Success Unlimited Sales and Marketing Group (www.susmg.com). He is also the creator of the Marketing for Profit Program, a three-part results program that provides the marketing systems, tools and ongoing support to help participants effectively build, manage and operate a profitable business (www.susmg.com/MarketingForProfit). Robert can be reached at 604- 535-2111 or rob@susmg.com.*

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