How To Develop Effective Promotional Literature

An Exercise in Practical
Design and Promotion For
Recycling Professionals
By Thomas S. Rhodes

"You know, we're just not reaching that guy."

INSANITY (in*san'e*te) n.
**1. The characteristic of repeating the same act
time and time again, while expecting a different
outcome each time.**

DESIGNING PROMOTIONAL LITERATURE

ESTABLISHING A NEED

Questions To Ask Yourself:

1. What is the specific purpose of the proposed printed piece.
2. Is it absolutely necessary? Are you creating more waste by printing a "throw away"?
3. What is your target audience? General public, youth, senior citizens?
4. How big is your "Universe"? Check your demographics!

DECIDING ON A FORMAT

There are many formats from which to choose. These include brochures, master brochures, fliers, scanable letters, rack cards, counter cards, pocket cards, tabloids and more! Which is best for your purpose?

Questions To Ask Yourself:

1. How will the printed piece be used? Will it be in a brochure rack or used as a handout or maybe even a self-mailer?
2. Can the number of different printed pieces be reduced by combining information on one piece? i.e. Instead of producing an 8 ½" X 11" folded brochure showing how to recycle and a full page flier with a map of county drop-off sites, perhaps you can print a brochure measuring 8 ½" X 14" or a tabloid with a map *and* information about recycling the right way.
3. How much is in your budget for printing? If budget is a major consideration, how much of the project can you do yourself....folding, layout, artwork, photography? Perhaps you can run the job on your office copier.

SELECTING A PRINTER

This should be done <u>prior</u> to making any moves toward printing your job!!!!!!!!

1. Visit a number of print shops to get a feel for quality and price.
2. Talk with other professionals and co-workers to see which printer they prefer and why they prefer that particular one.
3. Ask about average "turn around" on print jobs.
4. If possible, have them do a small job for you before committing to a critical print job. This will give you a good idea as to pricing, quality and turn around time.
5. Get to know your printer. Is your printer a Q & D? Quality printer? Honest? Did you check out the printing equipment? Can it do the type of job you need? Is the equipment in good shape?

WRITING COPY

The amount and placement of your copy is directly related to the format you have selected.

While promotional literature is a form of advertising, it has a number of special benefits to the writer which are different from conventional advertising.

1. Promotional literature is more selective. Since your literature is distributed through controlled means, rather than through general media placement, the target audience can be more sharply defined and the message can be written with the targeted consumer in mind.
2. Expenditures can be more clearly spelled out. It is easier to relate cost of production to the number of people in your target audience if you know roughly how many consumers you are contacting. You can calculate cost per contact.
3. Initial readership is virtually 100% . By and large, when you target a particular consumer group, you can tailor your message to this group which is pre-disposed to a particular message.
4. You have the opportunity for direct movement into the objective. Because you have the established interest on the part of the recipient, you can, and should get directly to the point of the pitch.

THE HEADLINE

Will your reader want to read the rest of your literature? The headline is all important in your printed piece. It sets the tone for the rest of the piece. John Caples, who has tested thousands of ads for sales effectiveness says, "If I had ten days to write a really important advertisement, I'd spend 9 days writing the headline and one day writing the copy." The headline is extremely important, yet many pieces of sales and promotional literature have weak, meaningless headlines.

Here are a few ideas to help formulate headlines.....

1. Begin your headline with the word, "Wanted"
2. Begin your headline with the words, "Who Else..."
3. Begin your headline with the words, "How To...."
4. Use words that have announcement quality or begin with the word "ANNOUNCING"
5. Tell a story.
6. Write your headline in news style.
7. Begin your headline with the word "NOW...."
8. Warn the reader to delay action.
9. Use a one-word headline.
10. Use a two-word headline.
11. Offer the reader a test.
12. Use a testimonial-style headline.

13. Feature a free offer.
14. Put a date in your headline.
15. Offer information of value.
16. Use a "common sense" provoking headline.

COMPOSING BODY COPY

The "Transaction Proposition" is the foundation for developing your promotional literature. Use this tool when putting together all your promos. It's the WIFM (What's In It For Me?) CONCEPT. Everybody wants to know how they will come out better when they act on your request.

REMEMBER: BOTH PEOPLE IN THE TRANSACTION MUST FEEL AS THOUGH THEY HAVE COME OUT AHEAD IN THE DEAL!

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TRANSACTION PROPOSITION

CONSUMER REACTION (What do)	CONSUMER REWARD (What get)
Open brochure or letter	Learn something new
Read it	Learn benefits to them
Decide	Feel proud on their decision ☺
Respond or act	Reap benefits directly or indirectly

Once the Transaction Proposition has been made, add the ENHANCERS.

ENHANCERS

Facilitators (To make "What do" easier)	Sweeteners
Risk reducers (ease their mind)	Incentives
Action facilitators	Choices

Promotional literature should direct the consumer to read on (every 150 words or so).

If you are using multiple piece printing such as with a master brochure, you should encourage the reader to refer to the other pieces in the package and vice-versa.

USE THE TENNESSEE PREACHER APPROACH: "Tell 'em what you want 'em to know, then tell 'em again and when you're done, tell 'em that you told 'em!!!!"

3

The copy you write should press the consumer to make a positive decision NOW! Couple your requests with benefits. (i.e. Please read this because you'll be glad you did and it will make your life much better.)

If you leave off __any__ part of the transaction proposition, you will lose 25% of your response. If you leave off the enhancers you will loose 10% of your response.

When stating benefits, list the primary benefits along with secondary benefits.

FEATURE	PRIMARY BENEFIT	SECONDARY BENEFIT
Centrally located drop-off	Easy to find	Saves time and fuel
Source Reduction Hot Line	Free information & referral	Save time and money

KEYS TO EFFECTIVE COPY WRITING:

1. Write as though you were talking directly to the consumer.
2. Use easy to understand words.
3. Use picture words (i.e. Our well lighted, easily accessible drop-off sites make it easy for you to do your part to help protect our environment by recycling.)
4. Tell the consumer to respond. (Don't plead!)
5. Have someone read your copy back to you aloud.
6. Use short paragraphs.
7. Make liberal use of heads, subheads, paragraph lead-ins and other special word uses.

GAINING READERSHIP

Here are some strategies for gaining readership......

1. Use a straight forward approach. (Recycling is the right thing to do and here's why...)
2. Use conversational style. (letter style, i.e. "You know, I was just sitting here at my desk, thinking how important recycling is to the environment and I wanted to share my thoughts with you....)
3. Use the "Premise Trap". Develop several statements the audience will have to agree to and follow them with your information. Most likely, they will have to agree with your statement. *Example:*

STATEMENT	RESPONSE
It is very important to protect our environment	Yes
Each of us is responsible for our part	Yes
Recycling is an important part of protecting our environment	Yes
With the new recycling centers in operation, recycling is easier than ever.	Yes
We know you'll want to do your part to protect the environment and recycle!	Yes

4. Use investigative style. (i.e. "I've checked this out and here are the benefits.......")
5. Use consumer testimonial. ("Our family has been recycling for the past year and we have reduced our trash disposal costs by one-half!", Mr. Joe Recycler of Rhodes, NC)
6. Use telegraphic style. (Several straight forward statements telling benefits)

PROMOTIONAL LETTERS

The letter is the single most read item in a mail-out campaign. When mailing out letters, try to address it to the individual or to the job title.

Here are some leads to use when opening a letter......

1. Straight forward approach. (i.e. "We want you to recycle because it's the right thing to do.")
2. X-Y lead. (i.e. "If you think the environment is important, then we know you'll want to join in the county's recycling effort.")
3. List benefits.
4. Open with a request for a response.
5. Open with a statistic.
6. Create a scanable letter.

THE SCANABLE LETTER

Scanable letters are letters that can deliver a message by being scanned quickly by the recipient. Although they are complete letters in every sense of the meaning, they contain special features that call attention to the main thoughts in the letter.

Here are some tips for creating a scanable letter......

1. Underline <u>interesting</u> items.
2. Use ALL CAPS for significant information.
        3. Indent copy block or headline.
4. Use double column.   Use double column.
5. Use bullets, asterisks, call-outs, etc. ****�֍✳✳●✳□✳✳✳✳✦□□✳□✦ ǀǀ✳□
6. Use *second color*.
7. Change **typeface.**
8. Simulate *Handwriting*
9. **Use Headlines!**
10. Use □⊞ + ✳ + ⊞ ✕ + ⅄ ⬈ ▣ Graphs, diagrams, halftones, etc.

One of the best ways to test scanability of a letter is to tape over everything but the scanables and give it to someone to see if they can figure out what the letter is trying to get across.

CHOOSING A PRINTING PAPER

Questions to ask yourself........

1. What mood are you trying to create? Festive, serious business, thinking green???
2. What paper stock will fit the finished piece better? Cover stock, text, index, tag????
3. How much should I spend?

When choosing a paper stock, consider runability, print quality, how halftones will look printed on this paper.

GRADES OF PAPER

BOND PAPERS are used for business letters and forms. The most common is 20 pound bond (typing paper). The best grade of bond is 100% rag. It is made from recycled cotton fabric.

BOOK PAPERS are used for text books. They may be coated or un-coated. The clay coating provides a glossy finish which provides a sharper image for both text and photographic reproduction. Un-coated or "dull coat" finish provides a glare proof surface.

TAG STOCK is a stiff stock used for identification tag, notebook dividers, etc.

TEXT PAPER has an interesting surface texture and is sized to increase resistance to water. It is used for announcements and booklets.

OFFSET PAPER has a special sizing added to make it suitable for offset printing. It comes in a variety of weights and coatings ranging from high gloss to a dull finish.

You can shop for just the right paper by talking with your printer or a paper company representative. They can provide you with swatch books and other tools to aid you in selecting the right paper for your job.

CHOOSING INK COLORS

Color can set the mood for your printed material. It can be used to draw attention to itself, to highlight and to give the feeling of quality.

Questions to ask yourself.......

1. Can I get the same effect without it?
2. Can I afford color?
3. What kind of mood am I trying to convey?
4. How can I get the most color for my money? Can I use screened colors for multiple color effects? What about color on one side only? Can I get a price break for ROP (run of press color)?

Here are some rules for dealing with color......

1. Do not screen dark colors behind body copy. Body copy should always be printed on a very light background with dark ink for good contrast and easy readability.
2. Surround color photos or illustrations with black and white artwork. This contrast helps to heighten the effect of the color and will attract the reader.
3. Help lead the reader's eye through your printed piece by using color as a guide. Put all paragraph headings and subheads in the same color. Separate different sections by using color screens or borders.
4. Emphasize key points by printing short sections of copy in a different color or by underlining in a different color.
5. In general, don't abuse color. The contrast between black and white and the color artwork is a powerful technique and should be preferred over wholesale coverage of the printed page by colored type and photos.

Remember.....a "whisper" of color will catch more attention than a "shouting rainbow"....Tom Rhodes' Law.

PREPARING FOR THE PRINTER

RULE #1: Try to be camera-ready or at least take the job as far as you can. The more you do, the more control you have over the finished product and the more money you can save.

RULE #2: Work closely with your printer or graphic designer as is possible. You will be able to make better decisions on your printing when you have advice from the experts, and besides, you may learn a thing or two in the process.

INTERCEPTING PROBLEMS

Errors are very costly to you and frustrating to the printer. Proofread, double proofread and have someone else to proofread your copy before sending it to your printer. Are the words spelled properly? Is the syntax correct?

REREAD! Eliminate useless words. Keep the message simple. Above all, be prepared to accept constructive criticism.

Whether you send your copy out to be typeset or you compose it yourself on your personal computer, make sure your copy is typed in upper and lower case. This will make it easier to follow. If any part of the copy is to be set in boldface, all caps, underlined, etc., make those notations using proofreader's marks.

When you are proofing, especially when dealing with a printer, make sure you are using standard proofreader's marks. (See handout with proofreader's marks.)

EXTENSIVE CHANGES. Use editing and proofreading marks only for small changes. If you have extensive changes in copy, you will need to **retype the copy!**

SELECTING A TYPEFACE

All too often, type is selected for its artistic contribution rather than its readability

Tips for selecting typefaces.......

1. Avoid decorative types, except for very special accents.
2. Avoid sans serif type (that which omits the tiny "feet" commonly found at the bottom of letters). The sans serif type looks sharper, but the serifs help to lead the reader's eye across the page. **Sans serif faces slow the reader 25% to 30%!!!!!**
3. Avoid **"ULTRA"** anything. Be wary about **Ultra Bold,** Ultra Extended **or other design excesses.**
4. Each typeface has its own personality. You'll notice that some type is **DIGNIFIED** while others seem to be *Relaxed and Friendly.*
5. For general readability in body copy, don't select a type below 8 point size. You will do much better using 9 point style for most purposes. The main body copy of this course document is typed in 12 point Times New Roman.
6. Make reading easy for your target consumer. If you are targeting senior citizens, consider using larger, easy to see type in the body copy.

SPECIAL EFFECTS IN PRINTING

One good way to get an unusual or second color effect is to use a "screen". Screened areas on a printed page suggest a that second paper color or a second ink color is being used. The screen effect is created by placing a plastic screen over the film or printing plate, thus blocking out part of the image or creating a color field image where there is none. This effect essentially changes the level of color in certain areas of the printed piece.

MAKING A LAYOUT

Your knowledge of printing processes and willingness to get to know your printer will come in very handy in this phase. Get to know your printer's likes and dislikes as far as what type of presswork he prefers to do. It may be that he likes to be really creative or that he hates to print wide areas of solid color. This could save you grief later on or it may be a blessing, depending on the situation. Get to know the press limitations. If the press your job is running on requires a 5/16" gripper margin, you need to allow for that......... Oh, by the way, you'd better find out what a gripper margin is while you're at it.

CREATIVE SERVICES

When you are using creative services such as photography, typesetting, illustration and so on, you often get what you pay for. You may end up paying more for a "cheap" photographer if you have to go back later and re-shoot or to compensate for lousy shots when you print.

"Clippers" are good sources of reference. Many times you can adapt clip art to your specific use. There are also clip art sources for recycling art.

Photography: Unless you are doing a four-color process brochure, use a good, well contrasted black and white print. If you're shooting your own shots, use a good professional film such as Kodak T-Max 100 speed. *Avoid Polaroid Shots!!!!!*

DEVELOPING GRAPHIC EMPHASIS

Graphic emphasis techniques are various methods of calling attention to particular points of interest in a headline or copy block. These techniques such as underlining, italicized typefaces, simulated handwritten notes, etc. all serve to provide entry points into the body copy.

THERE ARE THREE BASIC TYPES OF EMBELLISHMENT.......

1. Typewritten techniques. (Underlining, *asterisks, unusual punctuation marks or symbols ✳❄✱❆➕✔➕✗✗↩➡✓✔✗✎✎✉)
2. Plausible typewriter techniques. (Techniques which are not usually achieved on a typewriter but nevertheless do not strike the casual reader as inappropriate, such as italicized typefaces or various ink colors.).
3. Non-typewriter techniques. (Simulated handwritten messages, words with simulated pen underlines, diagrams and illustrations within the body copy.)

Graphic emphasis techniques help break up the body copy into manageable and readily digestible portions.

OTHER TECHNIQUES

Readership will be enhanced considerably through the judicious design and placement of:

Master Headlines
Call Outs
Tables
Subheads
Picture Captions
Short Copy Blocks

You must make a deliberate effort to program these techniques into your literature. Make the decision when and where to use the tools AFTER you have written the copy but BEFORE you have started the design.

USING PICTURES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Photo continuity is a powerful technique. Readership increases dramatically when you use pictures of people using your service. (160% readership)

Readership of materials using tables, charts and photos is about 130%

Static pictures receive 100% readership but pictures implying motion get 120% readership

Readership is higher when you use a non-human in a picture.

As a note of interest, studies indicate that dominant focus of men and women differ. You may want to consider this if you are targeting a predominately male or female group. Men prefer to see men in pictures, then women then children. Women prefer to see women, then children and then men. Men relate more to transportation and women to clothing.

ROUGHING OUT A DESIGN

1. **All brochures must have a master headline**
2. **Your master headline must summarize the Transaction Proposition in 15 to 20 words.**
3. **Use subheads for each of the benefits in the master headline**
4. **Give the reader a place to start and a place to stop.**
5. **Subheads should serve as a road map. All key items should be emphasized.**
6. **Stress IMPORTANT parts of your information over and over (Tennessee Preacher Approach.)**
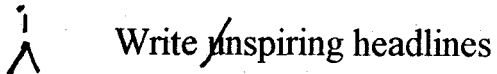7. **Summarize.**
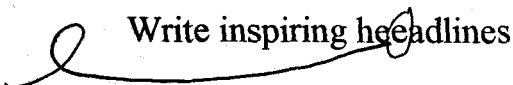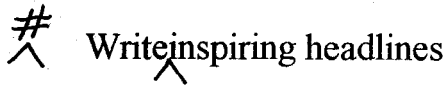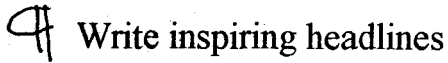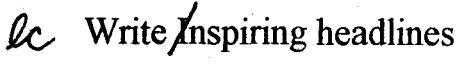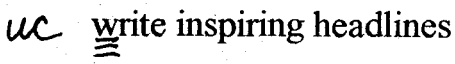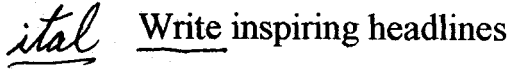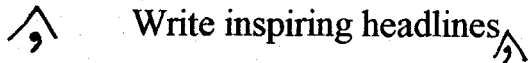
OTHER ATTENTION GETTING TRICKS.......

1. "Billboard" your message by putting it on both sides of your brochure. No matter which side is up, your message is easily read.
2. Use "Flash heads". These are used a lot on sales literature. They look like burst of color with a message printed on them.
3. Captions under photos and illustrations increase readership. Captions are the most read part of a printed piece. These can be used to direct the reader to other areas of interest.
4. Call-outs are descriptions directed to certain areas of pictures. They point out features by the use of lines or arrows. Call-outs help readers remember the pictures better.

5. If you are sending a scanable letter, ALWAYS INCLUDE A POSTSCRIPT! A P.S. emphasizes the importance of the information.
6. DON'T PANNELIZE! When you confine your copy blocks to the panels of a brochure, you do not encourage your reader to open the brochure further. If you position your copy so as to lead the reader to open the brochure, you will increase readership.
7. Don't be afraid of white space. Used well, it can enhance the impact on the reader.
8. If you are encouraging your reader to respond by phone, have your phone number on your brochure in a number of places so it is easy to find.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO USE WHITE SPACE!

How To Use Proofreader's Marks

EXAMPLE	MEANING
Write inspiring heeadlines	Take out
Write in spiring headlines	Close up
Writeinspiring headlines	Insert space
Write inspirign headlines	Transpose letters
Write headlines inspiring	Transpose words
Write inspiring headlines	Start new paragraph
Write Inspiring headlines	Make lower case letter
write inspiring headlines	Make uppercase letter
Write inspiring headlines	Use italic letters
Write inspiring headlines	Insert a period
Write inspiring headlines	Insert a comma
Write inspiring headlines	Insert quote marks
Write inspiring headlines	Change letter
Write inspring headlines	Insert missing letter
Write inspiring headlines	Replace broken letter

FONT STYLES

Matura Script

Times New Roman

Lucida Calligraphy

Brush Script

Bookman Old Style

Arial Black

Abadi MT Condensed Extra Bold

Abadi Mt Condensed Light

ALGERIAN

Arial

Arial Narrow

Arial Rounded MT Bold

Bauhaus 93

Book Antiqua

Bookman Old Style

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Braggadocio

Britannic Script

Brush Script

Britannic Bold

Calisto

Century Gothic

Century Schoolbook

Colonna MT

Comic Sans

COPPERPLATE GOTHICB

Courier

Courier New

DESDEMONA

ENGRAVERS MT

Eurostile

FELISX TITLING

Flexure

Selecting Type Sizes

8   This is 8 point type. This is dummy copy and it is a sample of this size of type.

9   This is 9 point type. This is dummy copy and it is a sample of this size of type

10   This is 10 point type. This is dummy copy and it is a sample of this size of type.

11   This is 11 point type. This is dummy copy and it is a sample of this size of type.

12   This is 12 point type. This is dummy copy and it is a sample of this size of type.

14   This is 14 point type. This is dummy copy and it is a sample of this size

16   This is 16 point type. This is dummy copy and it is a sample

18   This is 18 point type. This is dummy copy and it is a

20   This is 20 point type. This is dummy copy and it

24   This is 24 point type. This is dummy cop

28 This is 28 point type. This is dum

36   This is 36 point type. Th

48   This is 48 point ty

72 This is 72 p

GLOSSARY

Brochure– A printed promotional leaflet which is folded. Usually contains body copy, photos and illustrations.

Bullet– A large, solid-color dot placed within the copy of a printed piece. It serves to lead the reader's eye, give a starting point for reading, break up copy or call attention to important information.

Call-out–Lines or arrows leading from certain areas of a picture to descriptive phrases describing that area of the picture.

Camera-ready– Artwork which is ready to begin the printing process. The stage of completion after the graphic artist has finished but before it is photographed for the purpose of making the printing plate.

Caps– Capital letters.

Continuous Tone Print– A photograph in which colors range from black to shades of grey to white without breaks in the continuity.

Counter card– A promotional printed piece designed to fit on a store counter, free for the taking.

Dingbat– A small "doodle" or design used to call attention to certain parts of the copy.

Graphic Emphasis– The art of visually enhancing the visual interest of certain parts of a message in a printed piece.

Halftone– A photograph which has been reduced to a series of dots from a continuous tone print for the purpose of making it printable in offset and other types of printing.

Head– A headline.

Master Brochure– A brochure consisting of a folder containing a number of various printed pieces.

Photo Continuity– Having photos which carry on a theme and lead the reader's eye across the printed page.

Pocket piece– A printed promotional piece which fits in the shirt pocket. It is usually used for reference information.

Proofreader's Marks– A set of standard marks used to edit and correct copy before the final typesetting

Q and D– Refers to printing that is quick but not necessarily accurate or quality printing.

Rack Card– A printed promotional piece designed to fit in a standard literature rack.

Readership– The amount of attention a printed piece gets from the target audience.

Scanable– A printed promotional piece which can be understood at a glance because the main points of the entire piece are easily readable. Scanables use underlining color, headlines, flash heads, flags and other means to call attention to important items.

Sans serif– Letters that do not have little "feet" at the bottom. Gothic style letters.

Screen– (screen tint) – an area of color produced by partially blocking the printing image by placing a plastic screen between the light source which etches the printing plate and the plate. It reduces the amount of ink which is delivered to the paper, giving a lighter tint of the original color.

Serif– Little "feet" at the bottoms of Roman type styles such as this.

Sub head– A subordinate headline which usually supports the master headline.

Tabloid– A small newspaper (half the size of a standard paper, folded in the center. Pages are usually in increments of 4.

Target Audience– The audience chosen for a specific promotional campaign. (senior citizens, church groups, yuppies, etc.)

Typesetting– Type which will be photographed for the printing process. The finished copy.

Transaction Proposition– The art of telling the consumer the benefits he or she will receive by completing a series of predetermined actions.

Premise Trap– The art of getting a consumer to agree to a series of statements, leading him to make a positive, desired committment at the end.

Universe– The actual or estimated number of people in a particular sector . The number of contacts you propose to make in your target audience.

Just a reminder....