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### 3 REASONS WHY THE COPY YOU HATE WILL BRING PROFITS YOU LOVE

Every copywriter's nightmare. We write beautiful copy for a client, who takes one look and says, "You can't be serious! This is too sales-y...or too simple...or too different..."

And I'm reminded of the days, many years ago, when I volunteered as a Pet Adoption Counselor with the San Francisco SPCA. Looking back, I must have been training for what I do now. I had lots of enthusiasm. People often teased, "You're selling cats!" Sure enough, many visitors went up with a crate holding a furry bundle of joy.

Our Volunteer Coordinator kept reminding us, "Don't judge the visitors. You're not going home with this person. The adopter who drives you crazy may be the best thing that ever happened to a dog."

True.

And copy works the same way. We don't judge our friends the way their dogs and cats do. And we don't read our copy like our own customers.

I tell my own clients, "You may not like this copy. But you're not the target market, even if you think you resemble your clients."

Here are 3 reasons why.

#### 1. Customers live on a different planet.

If you hang around the Internet, you develop a unique lifestyle. For instance, some of my best friends are people I've never met. We exchange emails and phone calls for years. My favorite web designer is an American living in Brazil.

And you hear the same promises over and over. "Bring traffic to your website." "Attract all the clients you can handle."

But if you're targeting ordinary people (i.e., those who have actually met their best friends in person), many of our ho-hum phrases will seem fresh and exciting.

"Hype-free marketing? I like that," purred an earth-dwelling prospect recently. "That's a whole new way of looking at marketing."

Your world may not be the Internet. Maybe you live fitness, coaching, cooking, or finance. But chances are your familiar phrases will seem fresh and exciting to your target market.

#### 2. Customers want to be sold.

They know you're not putting up websites and creating brochures so you'll feel good and collect gold stars for your Permanent Records.

And if they want your service, they're looking for reasons to say "yes." Think of all those Madison Avenue ads with the theme, "You deserve it." Or, "You're worth it." They're giving us permission to spend our money.

As long as you're tasteful and – drum roll – meeting their real needs, your customers will actually appreciate learning about what you offer.

Recently I was pitching my services to "Frank," a prospective client who sells fitness services. Hesitantly, I referred him to a website I'd written for "Tom" – a financial professional who was terrified we were selling way too hard.

Frank was impressed. "This isn't the least bit pushy. It's so warm and friendly! Tom sounds like such a nice guy."

We're still talking. But when Frank sees his own fitness site, I bet he says, "Um – do you think we're selling too hard?"

#### 3. Customers don't want to stop and think.

Some words and phrases slow us down. For some good examples, pick up your college textbooks and maybe a couple of academic journals. You'll see words like "moreover," "counterintuitive," "although," and more. (I know. I wrote many.)

How did you read your college textbooks? I bet you read slowly, made marginal notes and hung on tight to your yellow highlighter pen.

Alas, website visitors don't study our copy the same way. We have to help them create highlights and move along fast.

Which gets read more:

(a) "Although you can work very hard, you may not see results for a long time."

(b) "But you can work really hard and wait forever for results."

Bottom Line: Expect surprises when you unveil your copy to your clients, especially if you're new to marketing yourself and your own products. When I first wrote the title Your 21-Day Extreme Career Makeover, I cringed: Was my site becoming the virtual equivalent of a used car lot?

But my target market – professionals and senior executives – started buying. And the rest, as they say, is history