

What is Direct Response Copywriting and Why Should I Use It?
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What is *Direct Response* Copywriting and Why Should I Use It?

Why should I hire a writer who knows how to write direct response advertising copy?

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The answer: use direct response copy and you get *more* response, *more* leads and *more* revenue. However, you **HAVE** to find a copywriter with the talent, knowledge and ability to write professional direct response copy.

Fewer and fewer companies have brochures these days but just about every company has a website. And every website has photos or some type of graphic, like a logo. It also has words, which in my world, we call **copy**. Copy is simply

the words on a website, in a brochure, in a catalog, or in some other form of marketing media.

There are two types of copy:

1. Fluff
2. Direct response.

Fluff can be well-written and informative and it can help to explain to people what you do and who you are. Fluff can even get people to send an email or buy something.

BUT...fluff will rarely motivate a child to eat ice cream.

The goal of all marketing must be to maximize response. Maximize response and you maximize revenue. Direct Response copy ALWAYS produces more response than fluff. ALWAYS.

If you have a website that's well designed with good photos and some grammatically sound copy, you're going to get some hits and you're going to get a response. If you send a direct mail piece to 1,000 potential customers, you are going to get some response, even using 'fluff' copy.

When your website has direct response copy, response increases and you get more revenue, more leads, and more customers. Use direct response copy and you're on your way to maximizing response and revenue.

Before I define direct response copy, let's run the numbers.

Let's say you're selling a radar detector that costs \$200. You buy a list of people who have purchased radar detectors in the \$150-\$250 range and you mail 10,000 direct mail letters. (And yes, it's easy to find a list of people who have bought radar detectors in the \$150-\$250 range.)

Using fluff copy, you get a .025 per cent response/buy. That's 25 radar detectors @ \$200 so you get sales of \$2,500. Let's say the mailing cost was 35 cents per piece for a total of \$3,500. That's a loss on the initial mailing.

Using direct response copy and every direct response technique in the book, let's say you get a 1 per cent response/buy. That's 100 radar detectors @ \$200 and sales of \$20,000. The return, with just $\frac{3}{4}$ of one per cent difference, is significant; it's achievable when you follow direct response principles. Now, let's say you continue to use direct response strategies to get 25 of those customers to buy a new radar detector every year for the next 20 years, that's \$100,000 in sales. Not bad for a letter that cost \$3,500 to send.

The most important part of a successful sales letter is the copy. To maximize response, you **MUST** use direct response copy that a writer who knows how to write direct response copy has written.

What is Direct Response Copy?

The core components of direct response copy...

- Four to eight words on the envelope that make the reader open the envelope if you're sending direct mail
- An attention-grabbing headline that knocks the reader between the eyes
- Sub-heads that tell the story if the reader does not want to read all the copy
- Every word is written to answer the question: "What's in it for me?"
- Several different call-to-actions and several different ways to respond
- Benefits of the features instead of a list of the features
- An emotional bond with the potential customer
- A story that gets the reader involved with the copy
- The body copy must be connected to the headline
- Clear, concise offers
- The primary benefit must be understandable in 20 seconds
- The copy targets the target audience and nobody else
- Irresistible offer that's totally clear
- Clear, relevant testimonials
- Simple sentences and no more than six sentences per paragraph
- Vivid language
- The copy sells happiness
- Numerous reasons to respond
- No hackneyed clichés
- Tell the reader what to do
- Give the reader a sense of urgency
- Copy that tells a story.

A skillful direct response copywriter can easily and quickly incorporate all the key direct response elements into copy that motivates someone to buy the product or service you sell.

Let's compare two headlines for the radar detector in the piece that's in the mailing. The first is fluff, the second is direct response. The research tells us that people who spend \$150-\$250 on a radar detector primarily value keeping up with whatever law enforcement is using.

A fluff headline...

INTRODUCING THE ACME XB30 RADAR/LASER DETECTOR!!!

So what? Ask the reader. Now, let's put a photo of a law enforcement officer next to this headline.

“My new VISE speed detector makes most radar/laser detectors completely useless. I’m invisible again and I’m going to write a lot of tickets.”

Officer Pete Smith

(Photo of Roger Jones next to his car)

“Sorry, Officer Smith, but you can put that ticket book away. I’ve got the New Acme XB30 Road Runner—the ONLY Radar/Laser Detector that detects VISE.”

Roger Jones—Acme Technologies

The direct response headline (a short conversation) clearly states the key benefit of the XB30—it's up-to-date and detects VISE, while other detectors do not.

The rest of the copy will explain the key benefit of the radar detector and also the benefits of the other features. Let's say that just the direct response *headline* increases response by 20 customers over the 'fluff' headline. That's \$4,000 in additional revenue.

I'm feeling confident that you're starting to understand why the world's most successful marketing companies use direct response techniques and hire direct response copywriters.

Again, the answer is easy: use direct response copy and make more money.

Let's repeat that because it's so important...I'm going to typeset the sentence in 72 point type in bold.

Use direct
response
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money.

In fact, some of the most successful copywriters charge upwards of \$70,000 for a single letter. Why do companies pay these massive fees? It's simple: in the world of direct response, everything is measured and companies that can afford the big fees know that the fee is a great investment.

You don't have to pay \$70,000 to get an effective direct response letter. You can pay around \$1,000 for a professionally written direct response letter. If even *that* seems like a lot, take a look again at the numbers for the radar detector and you'll quickly see that hiring a direct response copywriter is one of the better marketing investments you'll ever make.

You're Getting People to Your Website. Now What?

The direct response sales letter will get people to the Acme website. Visitors from the letter are people who might be on the fence about the XB30 but understandably want to know more before they spend \$200. If the copy on the website is 'fluff' then Acme Technologies is throwing money out the window—right now. However, if the copy on the website is direct response copy, it will persuade those people who got the letter but were on the fence, to hand over their credit card number (and email address). If the customer buys 10 more radar detectors in the next 20 years, that's well over \$2,000 in revenue per customer.

Direct response copy is even more important in the age of search engine optimization. Again, let's crunch the numbers.

Acme Technologies has hired a top-notch search engine optimization company and every time somebody types “Radar Detector” into Google, Acme technologies is top three on the first page. That’s a great result that brings 50,000 hits a month to the Acme site. With ‘fluff’ copy, the company turns those 50,000 hits into 500 sales a month.

At an average of \$200 per sale. That’s \$100,000.

Not bad.

However, after hiring a direct response copywriter to write the copy for the site, they turn 50,000 hits into 1,000 sales a month. That’s \$200,000. Over the course of a year, that’s an extra \$1.2 million in sales.

I think you are starting to understand why people pay top copywriters \$70,000 for a single letter.

However, Acme hired a direct response copywriter for \$5,000 to write all the copy for their site. That might seem like a lot but if sales go from 500 to 1,000 per month, which is realistic, the \$5,000 is a superb investment. Let’s say that hiring a direct response copywriter increases Acme sales from 500 a month to 600 a month. Again, the \$5,000 is a superb investment. If sales go from 500 to 600 a month, that’s an extra \$240,000 in revenue.

The owners of companies who understand, love, and appreciate direct response copy laugh at the competitors who use ‘fluff.’

Why spend money on websites, brochures, catalogs, email blasts, etc. etc., when you don't want to maximize revenue? If you're using fluff to sell your product or service, you're losing leads and revenue...as you read this...*right now*...Use direct response copy and techniques and response and revenue will increase.

L.L. Bean uses direct response copy. Google uses direct response copy. Every big bank uses direct response copy. The most successful small business in your city, town, or village, uses direct response copy and techniques. If there's a reason to use 'fluff' instead of the type of copy that L.L Bean uses, email me now. Scott@ScottMartinWriting.com.

If you're not familiar with marketing and even less familiar with direct response, read everything you can right now. Email me and I'll tell you about some books you must read if you want your revenue to grow.

By the way, I won't charge \$70,000 for direct response copy. My fees are significantly less. However, I'm so confident that my direct response copy will increase your revenue that you can pay me based purely on results. Or we can organize a set fee. Whichever works for you. Contact me at (704) 517-0241 or email here. Scott@ScottMartinWriting.com.