

## **WRITING WINNING HEADLINES**

American Writers & Artists Institute

[www.awaionline.com](http://www.awaionline.com)

To make a headline work, you have to make it specific enough to be intriguing but vague enough to provoke curiosity. The purpose of the headline is not to sell the prospect -- it is to capture his attention and engage him in the selling process.

Following are nine frequently used types of headlines. Pick up just about any successful sales letter and you'll likely run into one of them:

### **1. 'HOW TO'**

This is the most popular and most effective of the archetypes. A good place to start with any assignment. Many headlines aren't nearly as compelling if you remove the 'how to.' These two words act as a command for your prospect to carry out.

EXAMPLES:

- \* 'How to End Your Money Worries Forever'
- \* 'How to Win Friends and Influence People'

### **2. THE BIG BENEFIT**

This headline puts your biggest, most compelling benefit right up front.

EXAMPLES:

- \* 'Earn \$5,000 Next Weekend Without Leaving Your EasyBoy Recliner'
- \* 'Pay Zero Taxes Next Year!'
- \* 'Lose 40 Pounds in 7 Days Without Dieting!'

### **3. NEWS STYLE**

This refers to a headline that sounds like editorial copy. To make it work well, it is helpful to have some legitimate news to talk about. You might, for example, be promoting a new product. Or you might uncover some new facts related to an old product.

EXAMPLES:

- \* 'New Natural Hormone Promises to End Cancer Without Chemotherapy'
- \* 'Dentists Are Outraged -- New Book Reveals How to Get Free Dental Care!'
- \* 'Skinny School Teacher Gains 15 Pounds of Muscle With Miracle Meal'

### **4. THE ANXIETY HEADLINE**

Scare your prospect into paying attention. Give him a problem and the hope of solving it.

EXAMPLES:

- \* 'What Will You Do When Your Personal Assets Are Seized to Satisfy a Judgment Against Your Corporation?'
- \* 'Do You Make These Mistakes in English?'

### **5. PERSONAL REVELATION**

Offer an interesting admission about a topic your prospect should be interested in.

EXAMPLES:

\* 'They Thought I Was Crazy to Ship Maine Lobsters As Far As 1,800 Miles From the Ocean.'

\* 'The Lazy Man's Way to Riches'

\* 'They Laughed When I Sat Down to Play the Piano ... But When I Started to Play'

## **6. THE QUESTION**

Ask a question that implies a promise, a benefit, or a solution. (But make absolutely sure you know what your prospect's answer will be.)

EXAMPLES:

\* 'Why Is Your Dog Eating Dirt?'

\* 'Tired of Making Your Boss Rich?'

\* 'Do You Close the Bathroom Door When No One Is Home?'

## **7. THE TESTIMONIAL**

If you've done your research, and have a convincing case history, this can be one of the easiest headlines to write ... and very powerful.

EXAMPLES:

\* 'I Gambled with 3 Cents and Won \$35,850 in 2 Years.'

\* 'I Couldn't Believe My Eyes When I Tore Open the Envelope!'

## **8. THE STORY**

Everyone likes to read a good story.

EXAMPLES:

- \* 'The Insult that Made a Man Out of Tim Riley.'
- \* 'The Greatest Story Ever Told'

## **9. THE GUARANTEE**

When you are pretty sure your prospect wants your product -- and you want to give him a reason to choose yours over the competition -- this type of headline can be very effective.

EXAMPLES:

- \* 'Play Guitar in 7 Days or Your Money Back!'
- \* 'The Most Comfortable Shoes You've Ever Worn, or Your Money Back!'

One way you can make your headline writing go faster and better is to write a half dozen or so headlines for each of these nine types. Six times nine gives you 54 heads to choose from. Not a bad start.

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