

# **How To Write “Killer” Headlines**

by

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## Introduction

Hello friend! In this article I will show you some headline writing tips that I have digested from various sources that will become indispensable tools for you as a marketer – whether you work online or in print.

I'd like to start by asking you a question:

### **What is the point of a headline?**

Answer: To get the reader to read the rest of the ad!

Most ads fail because the headline failed to do its job, which is to get the reader to keep reading the ad!

So, I will outline a few principles that I follow religiously when constructing headlines.

### **Principle#1:**

#### **First And Foremost Your Headline Must STOP The Reader In His Tracks!!!**

So you need to start with what is called a “stopper”. It stops the reader dead in his tracks, and the whole point is then to get the reader to actually read the rest of your ad.

Marketers frequently refer to headlines as “the ad for the ad”. It is one of, if not, the most important part of your ad because if the headline is not effective, none of the ad gets read, and no sale is made.

### **Principle# 2:**

#### **Always Use The “YOU” Approach**

Most importantly, a headline must talk about the reader, not the product, or worse yet – you the seller. Always remember – are you writing an ad as an “ego trip” or are you writing to sell a product? Advertising costs money, time and effort – so dedicate yourself to what works in terms of selling!!!

Do you see the difference between the following headlines in regards to the “You” Approach?:

**“Delicious Lemonade 25 Cents a Glass”**

**“Why Not Quench Your Thirst With Some Delicious, Homemade Lemonade?”**

Do you see the difference? Most importantly – do you feel the difference? The second one “pushes” some emotional buttons – and you can actually “feel” the headline in your body when you read it.

Take notice of how the second headline talks to YOU and is about YOUR Thirst, it’s not about the lemonade.

No one cares about your stupid lemonade – they care about quenching their thirst!!!

One of the most common mistakes in conventional “agency” advertising is to use the brand name, or the product name as the headline.

When it’s your name it might feel good to see it in print, but that’s because of the “ego trip”. Just look at

**Justin Michaels’ Used Cars, - Simply The Best**

This headline is comical. (the name is fictitious). When I see something like this I just imagine how much better the person could do with a little knowledge of marketing.

This headline is about the seller, and the item – not the buyer, and illustrates no benefits. It is a failure. And people pay big bucks in newspapers for dumb ads like this, which will do nothing. Then they’ll blame the paper or someone else for their ineffective ad.

Here are some other examples of losing headlines that I see every day on the bus stop downstairs outside my house:

**Cello Lessons  
German Teacher  
Painting, Plastering, Scraping  
Man With Van**

I walk past these and don’t care to stop and read. I only notice them because I study headlines and make mental notes.

With this in mind, always try to use the word “YOU” or “YOUR” if possible. Maybe ask a question to turn the reader to reflect on himself, like “Wouldn’t You Like To...” .

The YOU approach is one of the most important principle in advertising.!!!

### **Principle# 3:**

### **FREE – The Second Most Important Word in Advertising!!!**

The word “FREE” is another attention getter. People love FREE stuff, it implies that they need make no effort or spend no money, and they get something of value. For you it is a technique to get people to read, to sign up, or to buy. Consequently, you should plan on offering something of a highly perceived value for FREE.

Here’s a real life example: I sell a jazz guitar technique book. People may either buy the download version from the website for \$14.95, or the hard copy version or \$29.95. In order to motivate them to buy the \$29.95 version, I offer a FREE gift CD-Rom, which they may keep even if they return the course.

All of a sudden, the hard-copy book deal becomes more enticing. The CD-Rom has 5 full-length songs from my CD’s which normally cost \$14.98 each, plus a note for note, written out version of one of the guitar solos on the CD for them to learn to play themselves plus a lesson on how to create a similar jazz guitar solo for themselves.

The cost of the CD to me? About 25 cents, and a few minutes to burn at home. However, the perceived value is higher!!! And it accomplishes a lot for me:

- It gets people to read the ad
- It makes people feel like they are getting more for their money
- It helps eliminate risk. “Keep The FREE CD Rom Even If You Choose To Return The Course”

### **A Funny Story**

My mom really made me laugh once. She’s had an unsuccessful try at direct marketing, and demonstrated many of the common pitfalls that people experience. She was marketing “crochet pillow patterns”. Many women across the US love to crochet – this could have been a great source of income for her.

Bear in mind that each pattern was only 5 pieces of photocopied paper.

She wanted to charge \$4.95 a pattern. I told her – charge \$14.98 for one pattern and tell them the other two are 100% FREE. She said “I can’t give those away for FREE!!!”

She’s nuts! It was simply a matter of perception – do you see? Either way she would be making \$15 bucks for 15 sheets of paper, but she didn’t want to give anything away for free.

**“FREE” is an attention getting word that will stop a reader dead in his tracks. Always try to offer something FREE, and get it up in your headline if possible, along with the word “YOU”!!!**

**Principle #3:**  
**Don't Ever Forget That Buyers Want Benefits!!!**

A headline has to do more than just stop people. The headline needs to describe a juicy benefit for the reader, and you'll need to tie this in with what we've covered so far.

What are some possible benefits?

- Solve a Problem Quickly and Easily
- Make Money
- Eliminate Difficulty
- Work Less
- Save Time

These are very general, but they are the core idea of benefits. Here's an example:

**“ANNOUNCING: Amazing New Technique Shows You How To Write Killer Headlines Quickly and Easily ...So You Can Start Selling Your Product Within Minutes!!!”**

Lets go down our “checklist” so far. Does the headline do the following:

- Talk about “YOU” – Yes
- Offer something FREE – No, not this headline. Hmm, maybe I need to re-work it.
- Solve a Problem? – Yes
- Do it Quickly and Easily – Yes
- Help You Make Money – Yes (Might not apply in all cases, could be presented as Saving Money) - Yes
- Work Less – Yes
- Save Time – Yes

And voila – you, the reader can't resist, and you read the rest of the ad!

**Principle# 4:**  
**Make It Newsworthy, and other Attention Grabbers**

People are always interested in news. You can make it seem that someone is reporting about something, rather than you selling something and this generates interest.

Notice the word “ANNOUNCING” in my headline in the previous section? That's “Newsworthy” word #1. Try to begin headlines with “ANNOUNCING”

Some other possibilities for starting headlines are

ATTENTION

NEW!

INTRODUCING

JUST PUBLISHED

AT LAST

HOW TO (Really Good Choice, I use this a lot!!)

WARNING (use with caution – this is a stopper, but you have to follow it up well)

Or address a group of people with

TO ALL (golfers who want to improve their game, housewives who are looking to save money on groceries, etc)

Here Are A Few Examples of Headlines With These Openers:

- INTRODUCING: New Instruction Manual Shows You The Science of How To Seduce Women Effortlessly!!!
- WARNING: For Serious Internet Marketers Only. All Others Stay Out!!!
- How To Win Friends and Influence People

I recommend keeping great headlines that you come across in your files. I tear out headlines when I see a good one. Recently I came across this in the real estate section of a newspaper, and it is on my refrigerator under a magnet right now:

**“DON’T PAY ANOTHER CENT IN RENT TO YOUR LANDLORD BEFORE  
YOU READ THIS FREE SPECIAL REPORT”**

I must admit, this stopped me!!! The free report that they offer gets people to learn about the benefits of owning a home. Guess what? A realty company offers this report and now has a growing list of potential home buyers.

The report will show them the benefits of owning their own home, illustrate the downside of wasting money in rent, tell them about equity and hold their hands throughout the sale. If they get a buyer to buy through them they get their broker’s fee!!! Pretty clever if you ask me!!!

**Principle# 5:**

**SOLVE A COMMON PROBLEM QUICKLY AND EASILY**

I know I mentioned this before, but it deserves it’s own section.

People want instant gratification and easy, painless, quick results – so let them know that you will solve a problem for them quickly and easily. It could be computer software, a pain reliever, a diet pill, or an instruction manual or video.

People will spend money to solve a problem sooner than they would spend to just “get something nice for themselves”. I’ll buy a winter coat to protect myself from the cold before I’ll buy a jacket that “makes me look good”. I’ll buy more memory for my computer before I buy a video game.

Imagine if you enjoy cooking and offer a recipe book as your information product. You could take a marketing approach like this:

**“Here’s A Quick and Easy Way For You To Put Dinner on The Table For Your Kids – In 15 Minutes or Less!!!”**

Now do you see how you could present your product as a problem solver?

Again, take note of the headline I used before to see this principle in action. Here it is again:

**“ANOUNCING: Amazing New Technique Shows You How To Write Killer Headlines Quickly and Easily ...So You Can Start Selling Your Product Within Minutes!!!”**

**Principle #6:**  
**Always Avoid Negativity**

If people feel turned off by your ad they won’t buy, so be careful not to verbally illustrate a negative or morbid idea – illustrate a positive idea instead.

Be careful with thinking a double negative is a positive!!!

Let’s say you are selling acne medicine. You would not want to see a nice clear photo of oozing pimples, you would rather see a clear pretty face, right?

Do that with words!!! Compare the following:

**How To Get Rid Of Horrible, Unattractive Acne That’s On Your Face**

**How To Have Clear, Beautiful Skin ... In Just Minutes!!!**

The first headline is “yuck”. The second line shows the bright, sunny, happy, positive way to the same goal. Get It?

Here’s a more subtle version.

**Are You Sick And Tired Of Being Poor?**

## **Would You Like To Boost Your Income, And Relax By The Pool At The Same Time?**

Always take the positive approach!!! You'll be presenting "the light at the end of the tunnel" for your reader rather than "an end to the horrible darkness". Get it?

### **Principle# 7: Modifying Existing Winning Ads**

When you see a great headline (if it captures your attention – that's a good sign) try to modify it to fit your product.

You Could Take This:

#### **How To Make A Fortune Selling Information On The Internet**

And Modify it to This:

#### **How To Make A Fortune Playing Tennis**

Both headlines have the "How To" hook and illustrate the benefit of "making a fortune". Whether it's about selling information or playing tennis is not the point!

Or, using a headline I pointed out before:

**“DON'T PAY ANOTHER CENT (on the type of thing you are selling, ON GUITAR LESSONS, ON COOKBOOKS, ON HOUSECLEANING MATERIALS) BEFORE YOU READ THIS FREE SPECIAL REPORT”**

### **In Conclusion...**

There's always more to learn with marketing, ad writing and headline writing, but the principles I have described to you are based on what works in real life and what has helped marketers really sell their products or services.

Study this newsletter several times and keep your eyes peeled for great headlines!!!

Warmest Reagrds,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Rafferty', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Adam Rafferty

P.S. If you plan to be marketing your product on the internet, I recommend that you learn about using email autoresponders to put your marketing efforts on “auto-pilot”.

These will save you incredible amounts of time and hassle, and help you make more money more easily!

To learn about what they do, and to get a FREE autoresponder, without having to spend even a penny click here:

<http://www.hot-response.com/?source=1000000>

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