

Power Writing

Dear valued subscriber to *Woman Dentist Journal*,

No, I am not proposing that you begin to embrace direct marketing as your way to grow your business. No, I am not going to tell you how to write one of those mass, junk-mail letters with lots of miniature paragraphs. But yes, I am going to tell you about some powerful writing concepts that will increase your chances that action will be taken after people read what you've written.

Recently I attended a writing conference. Isn't it funny how sometimes you gain as much during the networking breaks as you do from the course itself? While chatting with a fellow speaker, she suggested that I buy Yanik Silver's book, "Ultimate Sales Letter Tool Box." These concepts on power writing are from Silver's book. To find out more, logon to www.SurefireMarketing.com.

Concept No. 1: Your opener

This is the toughest part of any letter. The first few lines make people read on or toss it into that special round-shaped filing cabinet on the floor. You want to compel people to keep reading. Silver says that's why good copywriters cross out their first paragraph or two and start from there. That's because when most people begin writing, it takes a few paragraphs to warm up.

Some excellent ways to begin a letter are the same techniques I tell clients to use to start a presentation. You want to gain your reader or audience's attention. Here's how: Begin with a quote or startling piece of data, a question, or a story. Or, you can hint to the benefits your reader will get from reading your letter. (See the beginning of this article.)

Example openers that make people want to read more include:

- Imagine, for a moment, that it's six months from today....
 - Would you do us a favor? You have been specially selected to participate in an important survey about the Smith Dental Practice
 - Please take a minute from your busy schedule and read this letter. I promise you will not regret it
 - Let me make a prediction
 - You've got enough people trying to waste your time with things you don't really want or need; I'm not one of those people
 - This letter is going to be short and to-the-point. We don't want to make a big thing of it. Not yet anyway
 - Just a few weeks ago, I returned from the American Academy of Dental Practice Administration annual meeting. Maybe you've heard about this group. Anyway, if you didn't get to attend,

let me tell you

Concept No. 2: Your closer

According to Silver, your letter closer is almost your last shot at persuading your patients to take action. Don't just end with your phone number hoping they'll pick up the telephone and call you to make that appointment to do a total mouth reconstruction. You have to lead people by the hand and tell them to take some action, like make the appointment, fill out the questionnaire, or send referrals your way.

Karen Cortell Reisman, MS

Reisman, author of "The Naked Truth About Giving Great Speeches," teaches how to speak for yourself so that others listen, trust, and buy from you. She has been a visiting faculty presenter at The Pankey Institute, a speaker at many dental meetings, and president of Speak For Yourself® for 15 years. For the "Top Ten Ways to Blow It as a Communicator," e-mail her at Karen@SpeakForYourself.com. For her other learning tools, go to www.SpeakForYourself.com.



End with examples such as these:

- But don't take my word for it; see for yourself. Please logon to www.SmithDentalPractice.com to see dramatic before and after photos.
- So what are you waiting for? Drop the enclosed card in the mail today.
- I could go on and on with stories such as these, but here's the point: You need to prove to yourself that you can experience your own personal miracle.
- I urge you to take action today. Pick up the phone and call for your next appointment.

Concept No. 3: Your bullets

Bullets are one of the most powerful persuaders in a letter. The same philosophy applies to a presentation. Too often, I evaluate presentations that have miles of PowerPoint visuals filled with paragraphs of information. The audience becomes numb from data. Plus, it causes confusion and lack of clarity for your listeners. Similarly, in a letter, use more bullets and fewer paragraphs. It's easier to read, digest, and remember.

Silver suggests that you think of bullets as "mini headlines." Here are some of his bullet templates:

- How to avoid the 12 biggest dental home-care mistakes
- An easy, three-step system for ...
- Easy cure for ...
- The secret of ...
- Seven new ways to get ...
- How supermodels maintain their smiles ...

Think about your opener, closer, and bullets when typing your next letter or e-mail. Ask yourself if *you* would continue reading what you've just put on paper or in a Word document. Good luck writing letters that make your patients take action!

Warmly,
Karen Cortell Reisman, MS

P.S. Believe it or not, your P.S. is usually the second-most read part of your letter, so don't make it an afterthought. A powerful P.S. can double or triple your response.

Some compelling P.S.s that make readers do something include:

- P.S. Thanks so much for reading my article, and please, I need your feedback within 10 days.
- P.S. Remember, we offer ...
- P.S. If you are not totally convinced that this treatment is for you, please read the enclosed

comments from other patients.

