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**"The Write Touch"**

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**Come To My Seminar with Motivational Speaker, Chris Sopa!**

**The Power and Prose of Networking**  
**October 12, 2005**

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## Cool Links

<http://www.chrissopa.com>  
**Business coach and nationally renowned motivational speaker...this is one cool lady!**

<http://www.chesapeakecity.com>  
**My home base on Maryland's eastern shore, and a heckuva great place to visit.**

<http://www.absolutewrite.com>  
**A great place for budding writers, pros or wannabes.**

<http://www.cecilsoil.com>  
**A cool new magazine about the people of beautiful Cecil County, Maryland. And (shameless plug) I'm features editor and contributing writer.**

## Got a Website? Get a Newsletter!

Almost every business out there either now has a website or is intending to get one. The Internet is jam-packed with them. However, a very small percentage of those websites really pull their weight, they're just online advertisements taking up megabytes of cyberspace. How do you know if your website is "working" for you? One way is to offer content that means something to your market...something that gives value.

Successful marketers don't focus on themselves...they focus on their customers. It's not about me, it's about you. What can you offer your customers that will add value to their business? To their life?

People don't like to be "sold." Instead of listing your business features in your newsletter, offer your expertise...position yourself as a problem-solver for your market and give them something they can use, and they'll be bookmarking your site, not just clicking out of it.

A great way to add value to your website is to offer a regular newsletter as a service to your customers. It doesn't have to be long, in fact, the shorter the better...but it should offer them information that appeals to them at some level. Think about who will be reading your newsletter. What's in it for them? What ideas and articles can you use that will be beneficial to them? Keep it focused on their wants and needs, and your "e-list" will expand.

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## The Mind Thinks in Pictures, But...

When someone mentions "The Mona Lisa," what comes to mind? A mental image of the famous painting, of course.



Our brains are filled with the images we see every day, all catalogued nicely into files that can be conjured at a word, a touch, even a smell.

So if a picture is worth a thousand words, why don't we use pictures to handle the bulk of our communication? Because we are individuals...and our individual interpretations of pictures are as varied as the stars in the heavens. For example, I can say the word "picture" to a hundred different people and each

will form their own mental definition: a landscape, a portrait...a child's

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For more information on HEADLINES, read this study on “Eyetracking” by the Poynter Institute: <http://www.poynterextra.org/eyetrack2004/main.htm>.

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crayon drawing, perhaps? That’s why words are so important—we are creatures of language. Words tell a story in our minds much more effectively than a string of pictures can. Words can make us laugh, make us cry...it’s like watching a movie in your head! The right words can strike an emotional chord that spurs someone to action (like buying your product?).

So the key to good copy isn’t just to sell...it’s to induce people to buy. Take a look at the advertisements you see in the newspaper and in magazines. Really take the time to read them. Which ones strike your fancy? The ones that list a billion features, (We sell blah, blah, blah and blah, cheaper than anyone else!) or the ones that strike an emotional chord and evoke positive mental pictures? The next time you’re going through your favorite magazine and an ad speaks to you, clip it and save it in a “Snitch File.” The concept can come in handy when you’re brainstorming your next advertisement.

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## Headline Tips

(I borrowed these from copywriter Lorrie-Morgan Ferrero of Studio City, California. You can visit her at [www.red-hot-copy.com](http://www.red-hot-copy.com))

**Make that top left corner count** – Readers are drawn to your header graphic and top headlines first. Obviously this would be a no-brainer place to put important information first.

**Headlines should be in large font** – Since the eye is drawn first to the headline then other page elements, they recommend using larger font (but you already knew that).

**The hook can be used to reel them in** – Readers usually read the first few words and decide whether or not to keep reading. Again, they reinforce that what you say early on in your copy is crucial to keeping them there or leaving in a heartbeat.

**Don’t fear the unusual** – Initial words that are a bit out of the ordinary are more likely to capture attention. (This is probably the reason the action words you see used in a lot of copy are sometimes mistaken for hype.)

**Small type makes them read** – Larger type promotes scanning, while smaller type encourages closer reading. (This doesn’t mean you change all your fonts to 8 point. Keep it balanced.)

**Lots of white space** - Shorter paragraphs get read over the longer ones. In fact, short paragraphs get TWICE as many overall eye fixations as longer ones.

**Copy counts** – Readers are drawn first to the words and then to the graphic elements.

**You get 5 chances to work your magic with headlines and subheads** - Readers give you a minimum of 5 chances to engage them with headlines and subheads. So you should not scrimp on your headline writing exercises.