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Copywriting for Business
“The Write Touch”

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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.

Do They Really Read All That?

In looking at advertising campaigns, many businesses overlook **Direct Marketing (DM)**. As business owners and busy people, we don't have time to read sales copy, so we assume that no one else does—but we're wrong!

Show me the money...

According to the Direct Marketing Association, sales from Direct Mail for 2005 were expected to reach \$1.8 Trillion dollars (yes, TRILLION). Direct Mail includes mailed postcards, brochures, sales letters and catalogues, as well as Internet sales material sent to targeted email lists, all of which generates an astonishing amount of money in sales every year. And DM is measurable. Unlike other types of print advertising, your ROI can be pinpointed within a short time of mailing.

Zero in on your target...

However, all DM is not created equal. Two main reasons that some campaigns fail are lack of targeting, and boring copy. Your rate of success depends on how closely you target your market, and whether your message keeps their interest and resonates with them. And surprisingly, a well-targeted audience statistically responds better to longer copy than short, even on the Internet (see Marketing Experiments at www.marketingexperiments.com).

Remember, you're not the customer...

As with any marketing efforts, the trick is to think like your customer. Nationally recognized copywriter, Dan Kennedy (www.dankennedy.com), who specializes in DM, puts it this way: “The person who says ‘I would never read all that copy’ makes the mistake of thinking they are the customer. And they're not. We are never our own customers... when your message is matched to a target market that has a high level of interest in it, not only does responsiveness go up but readership goes up, too. The whole issue of interest goes up.”

[Want to know more about Direct Marketing? Come to my seminar on March 30th! \(www.aparcher.com\)](http://www.aparcher.com)

What is a USP and why do I need one?

In sales terms, your USP is your Unique Selling Proposition. It's

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what separates you from the pack—a compelling reason why your customers should buy from you instead of your competitors.

Examples of familiar USPs include:

- “Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there” (State Farm Insurance)
- “The Un-Cola.” (7-Up)
- “The company you keep.” (New York Life)

Your USP should be a short statement about your product or service that makes a proposition to the consumer that promises a specific benefit, and one that the competition either does not have or does not offer – and it must be unique (that’s where the “unique” in Unique Selling Proposition comes in).

The uniqueness of your benefit should also be **something your customer really cares about** to win them over. For example, in the “Like a good neighbor” statement, State Farm differentiates itself from its competitors by presenting itself as a “good neighbor,” meaning someone who cares about you, and will be there in times of trouble – not a huge, faceless corporation that considers you a number and takes forever to process your claim.

Selecting a good USP is essential in developing your “brand,” and once you come up with yours, use it across all of your advertising mediums to solidify that brand to your market. Remember that your USP isn’t just a catchy advertising phrase. Successful USPs always **imply a specific benefit that differentiates you from your competitor, and strikes a meaningful chord in your market.**

Start your SNITCH file!

It’s time to start thinking up tag lines, headlines and marketing ideas for 2006. As you go through your mail, make it a point to read over items that “catch your attention.” They could be post cards, the copy on the outside of an envelope that you “almost” threw away but were curious about, advertisements in your favorite magazines—anything that grabs your attention for more than a few seconds while you’re sorting.

Think about why a particular item caught your eye, and make a note or two in the margin or on the reverse, then file these little jewels in a “SNITCH” file, and refer back to them when brainstorming ideas for this year’s marketing materials.

You’ll be surprised at the number of things you used to throw away as junk mail that can actually give you ideas for marketing your own business!