7 Questions to Determine Whether Your Ad Is Ready for the Big Time

The following excerpt is from Perry Marshall, Keith Krance and Thomas Meloche's book Ultimate Guide to Facebook Advertising. *Buy it now from* Amazon | Barnes & Noble | iBooks | IndieBound

How do we make sure our brand and message become focal to our prospects? How is this done so our brand and message become so obvious they begin to permeate the prospect's mind? In researching this for myself, I created the following seven questions that I ask myself before releasing any type of ad copy to ensure that the brand and message have a prospect's focused attention.

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1. How do I make the offer appear novel, unique and distinctive?

The goal is focused attention. It doesn't matter how great the product or how compelling the message is. If people don't hear it, if they don't pay attention to it, it's not going to convert them.

This is really easy if the offer happens to be brand new – something the market's never seen before. But, if your offer isn't new – if it's something people are used to seeing – here are some questions to ask in order to attract the prospect's focused attention:

- What's a way to make the offer feel new and noteworthy?
- What's a way to make the offer new?
- What's a different angle?

- Are there any current news stories that can be used to help attract attention to the offer?

2. How do I make the offer simple and easy to understand?

Humans love simple. If we understand it quickly and effortlessly, we like it more and ascribe it more validity. How can things like rhythm and rhyme be leveraged? Children learn the alphabet by simple and easy songs. It's a simplifying mechanism, and people like it because of that.

You must be wondering, "How can I make my offer seem simple and easy to understand?" Think back to every major hit song you've heard. Google the top 100 most popular songs of all time, then listen to the chorus. They're made up of single-syllable words. Try to be just as simple when writing ad copy.

3. What's an opening question that, when answered, will trigger a desire for consistency and drive a sale or action?

What will make a prospect say, "Yeah, this is who I am and this is how I'm going to answer." It's questions like, "Do you consider yourself a helpful person? Do you consider yourself to be brave? Is your product or service good?" Good opening questions draw attention, but the questions that when answered drive consistent action and, specifically, action that's consistent with the desired action, that's even better.

Questions are compelling and draw attention. But, by only asking a general question, you engage the mind, not the heart. When asking someone, "Are you brave? Are you helpful? Is what you're doing good?" the person's answers say something about

themselves. And if that informs the next action that you would like for them to take, then all the better.

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4. How do I pre-expose the audience to a concept linked to a desired emotional stimulus?

In other words, how do you pre-expose the audience to make them feel a certain way? How can a link be established to a product or service and then to the desired emotion? In other words, how do we want our audience to feel so that they'll want to make a purchase? What does their emotional state need to be if they're going to make that final purchase decision?

One example that illustrates this is an ad for an early bird sale that was about to end. The ad image was of the low battery warning on the iPhone. If you own an iPhone, the emotion you feel because of that low battery warning icon is a sense of urgency like, "OMG. I've got to plug it in."

What does your phone running out of juice have to do with the event being nearly sold out? Nothing! But, the low battery image exposes people to the emotional stimulus, which in this case is urgency and the need to act now. In using this commonly known image, it exposes the desire to emotional stimulus, which causes the action to take place.

5. What mental links and associations can be tapped into and positively associated to the

offer?

How can you associate your product, your service, with a known common experience? The focus here is mental links. Mental associations like the metaphors, memories, common shared experiences and nostalgia that become associated with a product in a positive way – that's the focus of question number five.

Great ads tap into the memories and the feelings of an entire group of people and then associate a product to that. That's basically the way Coke has been selling brown sugar water for decades. They've been associating this product to people's lives, whether it's family or friends or good times. To associate a product with a memory, it's necessary to know the positive associations the audience has experienced and find a way to take them back there. Then those positive feelings are transferred to the product and it becomes instantly understood and trusted more rapidly.

6. How can cliffhangers be created to hold attention and leverage the close to create that cognitive closure the customer's brain so desperately desires?

Introducing mystery is another way to capture attention. What's a compelling mystery that can be leveraged at the beginning of your message to hold the audience's attention? Use a story, but a story where the ending isn't offered until the message about the product or service is complete.

Tell the story, then weave in the message. If you close the story too early, the audience is done – they're no longer paying attention. Cognitive closure to the story needs to

occur at the point of sale or when the sale close happens.

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7. How do I create a visual or mental portal for the prospect to pass through that, when they do, makes them open to new opportunities?

Is it a visual thing, such as walking with the prospect? Are they passing through a door? Is it a change in background, tone and music? What is the signal that will make people say, “Now it’s time to make a change.”

There’s something fascinating in how our brains work when passing through a door as we move from one room to another. It’s an attention reset that denotes, “Hey, something has changed. What was before is not the same. It’s OK to pursue a new path.” Whether subtle or more obvious, there needs to be some type of mental cue that says, “Hey, we’re passing into something new together. It’s time to make a change.”

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