

5 Tips for Powerful Headlines

Whether it's direct mail or signage, email or print advertising, a great headline stops your audience in its tracks. Paired with relevant images, a great headline grabs people and makes them say, "I need to pay attention to this!" Especially if it's targeted or personalized in some way.

Here are five insider tricks to increasing the stopping power of your headlines.



Want more tricks for creating compelling headlines? Let us help you plan your next killer direct mail campaign!

1 Tap into breaking news

Tying your products and services to current events increases the relevance to your audience and the urgency for them to act. Financial services take advantage of uncertainty in the stock market. Retailers of snow blowers and electric generators tap into predictions of early winter storms. What current events can you tie into?

2 Advocate for your audience

Everyone wants an advocate—someone who will look out for them. The message is: *We care*. This is a technique used to great effectiveness by accident lawyers. "Hurt in an accident? We can help!"

3 Startle the reader

When we think of shock value in marketing, we often think of nonprofit solicitations for hungry children and abused pets, but it works for other verticals, too. Along one major highway is a billboard with a smiling senior woman and the headline: "I didn't want my chest cracked open!" The billboard is for less invasive heart surgery at a local hospital.

Shocking headlines should not be used simply for the sake of shock alone, but for the right campaigns, they can tap into deep emotions and move your audience from complacency to action.

4 Name drop

This technique takes advantage of people's inherent interest in celebrities and inside gossip. You may not know the celebrity personally, but you can use a line from a movie, a TV talk show, or even a magazine article. For the financial market, it might be a quote from Warren Buffet. From the sports world, it might be LeBron James. In your market vertical, it might be a well-known industry leader.

5 Commiserate with their frustration

Share the reader's frustration. "Don't you hate it when . . .?" Then solve their problem. Sharing in their frustration creates identification. Showing that you can solve their problem moves them to action.