



Michael Carney

Flyers and catalogues

Printed materials are perhaps the most commonly-used weapons in the retail marketing arsenal. Are yours working for you?

Most of us are pretty familiar with the processes involved in producing flyers or catalogues to promote products currently on offer. Nevertheless, we're devoting this month's column to the topic, for several reasons:

1. When we think we've mastered a particular skill, we just tend to do the same thing over and over. However, we might be overlooking some more effective methods of achieving our goals.

2. Even in a mature field, such as flyers and catalogues, there may well be new techniques and technologies that have come along since we last reviewed our operation.

3. If flyers and catalogues are one of our most-used tactics, we owe it to ourselves to ensure that they are as hard-working and profitable as they can be. If that involves reviewing and tweaking our current efforts, that's exactly what we should do.

With those considerations in mind, let's take a look at four aspects of marketing through flyers and catalogues that offer the best opportunity to improve their yield.

The pitch

Are you actually 'selling' products effectively in your flyers and catalogues?

Some businesses think it's enough simply to use their advertising to announce product and pricing details and then stand by to accept people's money. That might be true for the launch phase of really hot products – such as the iPad, where pent-up demand is such that the only thing that customers want to know is when and where to purchase it – but that's definitely the exception rather than the rule.

Most products need a whole lot more selling – especially those products featured in printed matter where the words and pictures alone have to do the heavy lifting.

Yes, product pictures and descriptions are important – but people make buying decisions based on their emotional feelings. Solid, logical reasons are important – but only afterwards, to justify the purchase.

So, how can we harness emotions to work for us? Drew Eric Whitman, in his book "Ca\$hvertising", suggests that the following eight desires are biologically programmed into us (and if we can tie our marketing messages to tap into at least one of these basic drives – ideally more than one – we should hit paydirt):

- Survival, enjoyment of life, life extension;
- Enjoyment of food and beverages;

- Freedom from fear, pain and danger;
- Sexual companionship;
- Comfortable living conditions;
- To be superior, winning, keeping up with the Joneses;
- Care and protection of loved ones; and
- Social approval.

Some retail marketing examples that tap into these primal urges are shown below:

And, yes, we know retail ads have to sell products – but if you don't start from an emotion-laced premise, you're unlikely to catch a prospect's attention long enough to spell out the product and price details anyway.

The offer

Once you've caught a prospective customer's attention, then what? You need to make them an offer they can't refuse. Some options, drawn from the book "2,239 Tested Secrets for Direct Marketing Success" by Denny Hatch and Don Jackson.

Free Gift Offers

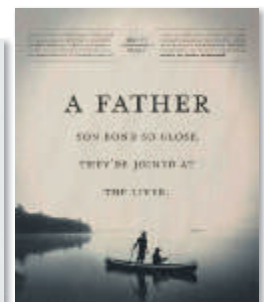
- Buy One Get One Free
- Free gift just for trying the product
- Free gift with purchase
- Multiple free gifts with a single order
- Your choice of free gifts
- Mystery gift offer
- Free demonstration
- Free fact kit
- Free booklet or video



Enjoyment of Food and Beverages: Ad for Legal Sea Foods, created by DeVito/Verdi.



Sexual Companionship: Ad for, and created by, Half Price Books.



Survival, enjoyment of life, life extension: Flyer for Mount Sinai Medical Center, created by DeVito/Verdi.

NB: these ads were all US National Retail Federation RACIE (Retail Award for Creativity, Innovation and Excellence) winners in 2010 or 2011. See more at: <http://www.nrf.com/racies11/>

