

Marketing Insight: Michael Masterson on Fear and Greed

Direct Marketing gurus will tell you that people buy information products for one of two reasons: greed or fear. In my presentations at AWAI's copywriting bootcamps, I try to dispel that myth by pointing out all the other feelings that are involved in buying and selling (e.g., pride, shame, anxiety, loneliness, etc.).

The subject came up last week in a conversation with PG, one of the most successful copywriters in America. We were talking about marketing a service that would help people through the times ahead, which he sees as very bleak.

When the conversation turned to "how would we write," the promotion, PG said, "One thing we don't want to do. Spend too much time trying to scare people."

He went on to say that his success in selling fear-based products (any kind of problem-avoidance or problem-solution product) increased geometrically when he realized that "fear paralyzes people."

Scaring people, briefly, might be a good way to get to their attention, he acknowledged. "But the copywriter who leaves his customer too long in fear will end up with very low response rates."

I believe this is a major insight. It corresponds to what I learned about selling health cures. You don't want to dwell too long on the problems of cancer or heart disease. Your prospects understand this stuff. What you need to do is offer solutions – or "comfort," as PG put it.

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1 Response to "Marketing Insight: Michael Masterson on Fear and Greed"

Dear Michael

Thanks for your articles.

I don't think ordinary people buy information products out of Greed. Some marketers sell products out of Greed and fear.

The Greed will surface it's ugly head when the greedy marketer zero's in on a unsuspecting person who has a need. That greedy marketer will do anything to get that potential customer before another greedy marketer does, that's where the fear comes in.

Thankfully there are honest marketers out there also.

Regards

larry

Winfieldsbest – over a year ago

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American Writers & Artists Institute

220 George Bush Blvd, Suite D

Delray Beach, FL 33444

(561) 278-5557 or (866) 879-2924