

Secrets of Writing for the Self-Help Market

Have you ever bought a book to help improve your business or personal skills? What about a wealth-building or spiritual-growth audio program?

If you answered "yes" to at least one of these questions, you might be interested in writing for a market that is always in demand: self-help.

Let's face it, almost everyone wants to do or be better. We want our lives to be healthier ... wealthier ... more successful ... and more satisfying. And we crave information that appeals to those desires.

According to Sara Pond, Creative Director for Nightingale-Conant (the world's largest publisher of self-improvement audio programs), copy for the self-help market should:

- Offer a strong promise and big idea.
- Focus on strong benefits.
- Present a unique and fresh angle.
- Reveal just enough information to whet the prospect's appetite. (If the prospect feels satisfied with what you've given him, he won't buy.)

AWAI graduate Catherine Cairns, who specializes in this market, offers these additional tips:

- Pay attention to the title and subtitle of the product. In many cases, it contains the USP.
- Look for big ideas and other selling ideas in the introduction or the first chapter of books, e-books, and special reports, and in the first transcript of audio programs.
- Use a strong metaphor or word picture to hook your reader's attention. The author might even reveal one in the book or transcript.
- Show prospects that the product offers a quick and simple solution to a specific problem or desire – do A, B, and C to get D (if possible). People want easy solutions.
- Sign up for self-help e-zines and start building a library of self-help books. This will give you a vast swipe file of good selling ideas for this market.

If you're interested in writing for the self-help market, you won't have any problem finding potential clients. Hundreds of companies sell self-help products. Some of the largest direct-mail self-help companies include Rodale Books, Learning Strategies Corporation, Nightingale-Conant, Prevention Health Books, and Boardroom.

Get on the mailing list of one or more of these companies. And don't forget to do your homework. Then, when you're ready, call them, drop them a postcard, or send a self-promotion package. Remember, these companies are interested in finding good copywriters who can write controls. So don't be shy. Get out there and show 'em your stuff!

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