

An \$11.9 Billion Niche

By Will Newman

According to Marketdata Enterprises Inc., the self-help market is growing by 7.9% a year.

Besides its huge promise of a profitable payday, the self-help market is exciting because it's not just a niche. It is a super-niche with a large number of sub-niches, one (or more) of which is bound to interest you.

Just a few of these sub-niches include health, beauty, spirituality, business opportunities, alternative health, self-improvement, weight loss, yoga, how to quit smoking, relationships, religion ... and far more.

So if you're not interested in writing about weight loss, you might enjoy writing about beauty products or astrology or even financial self-improvement.

And you can still position yourself as a specialist in the self-help niche.

Self-help direct marketers also sell more types of products than those in any other niche. You can write about tapes, lectures, books, CDs and DVDs, personal training sessions, seminars, memberships ... and on and on.

There are two added bonuses to writing for this niche.

For one thing, you'll frequently be offered sample programs to try out yourself so you'll know what you're writing about. (Imagine getting a \$495 self-improvement DVD program for FREE!)

The other added bonus is this: In researching, studying, and sampling the products, you become one of their beneficiaries. In other words, your work can help you become healthier, wealthier, slimmer, more financially astute ... you name it ... because you become an expert in how to do it.

Writing for the self-help market isn't much different than writing any other direct-marketing copy ... with a few crucial exceptions.

As with any powerful and successful direct-marketing promotion, you must get to know your prospect intimately, almost as well as you know a good friend. But with self-help products, you don't START there. You must first get a deep understanding of what you're selling.

The other fundamental difference is in the way you focus on benefits. While you must focus on benefits and not features in all successful DM writing, you have to dig even deeper and identify the more personal benefits your self-help product holds for the prospect.

Let's say you're selling a tape program that promises to help your prospect accept and love himself. The features are that this program comes on 12 CDs in a leatherette binder.

The benefits of the program include being able to listen at your convenience while driving, sunbathing, or working around the house. Another benefit is that it's easy to go back and repeat concepts or lessons to reinforce what you're learning.

An additional (and somewhat deeper) benefit that you could point out to your prospect is that the program can bring about changes in his relationships with others ... changes that empower him to succeed in work, play, and family life.

This is a level of benefit many copywriters wouldn't have much problem finding – but you're not going to stop there. You're going to dig deeper and help your prospect see that this program can also give him the courage to take that dance class he always wanted. Or sing in the community chorus, even though (and here you're getting really personal with him) his mother may have said he had the voice of a cow.

In fact, you're going to convince your prospect that this is the one program that can release him from all the negative feelings his mother, father, older sister, teachers, and others ever forced on him. Finally, he will be free of their oppressive influence. And (this could be deepest benefit of all) he will then be stronger, smarter, healthier, and BETTER than they are!

By the way, you'll find that it's usually better to express the powerful benefits at this deep, deep level INDIRECTLY. In other words, instead of flat-out telling your prospect he'll be stronger, smarter, and healthier than his mother, father, sister, etc., implying it with clever stories that leave no doubt in his mind.

Digging out deep, deep benefits – the powerful stuff that drives a prospect's need to buy a self-help product. You can do that, can't you? So why not consider writing for this niche?

Oh yes, there's one more benefit in writing for the self-help market that I almost forgot to mention. It can be a LOT of fun!

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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

