

Skyrocket Response by Eliminating Your Prospect's Risk

By John Wood

Today, I'm going to talk about something Dan Kennedy refers to as "the most powerful sales technique in the world ... "

Risk Reversal.

Every time your reader makes a decision, they have to determine whether the promised benefits are worth the risk of making a purchase. If you can eliminate the risk they face – through Risk Reversal – then all they have left to focus on are the potential benefits they'll receive.

So what exactly are the risks they believe they are taking?

It could be a number of things. The number one concern is the risk of financial loss. But there are other risks they want to avoid, such as loss of time and convenience. Plus, they may be concerned that it might be a hassle to get their money back.

Your prospect also risks the loss of face, embarrassment, and frustration that come with being associated with wasting money on an ineffective product.

The most common way to take the risk away from your reader is to offer a guarantee. Thirty-day guarantees are pretty standard. A 90-day guarantee is better.

Studies have shown that longer guarantees result in *more sales* and *less returns*.

To help give you some more ideas on how to use risk reversal to boost the effectiveness of your copy, I've put together nine risk-reversal techniques for your consideration:

1.

Tie your guarantee to performance – In his book *Getting Everything You Can Out of All You've Got*, Jay Abraham offers up an example of a performance-based guarantee that a company that sells a home teaching program that improves the reading skills of children uses. Their guarantee is ...

"Your child will raise his reading or spelling grade by at least one grade level on his next report card or your money back."

2.

Let the reader keep the bonuses – A popular technique, this is used quite a bit. As part of your guarantee, you let the reader know that should they choose to return the product purchased, they can keep all the bonuses included with their original purchase.

3.

Offer the reader more than their money back – This is where you offer your reader something along the lines of double or triple their money back should they decide that the product is not right for them.

There are two ways to do this. Say something like, *"I'm so sure that the Crystal Massager will eliminate your aches and pains that should you decide for any reason to return it, we'll offer you double your money back."* On the surface, this seems risky, but if you've got a great product, it could be a real sales booster. You'll want to test this out on a small list before rolling it out on a larger scale.

The other way to do this is to offer the reader, say, double or triple their money back, but on the condition that they document that they've followed the recommendations in the product and have come up short. For example, you could write something like this ...

"If my five-step system doesn't result in a 100% increase in sales in the first three months, I will give you double your money back! All I require is documentation that you've implemented my system as laid out in the program."

4.

Offer a free trial – You get to try something out for set period of time, without paying for it, to see if you like it. This is ideal for selling software on the Internet.

It's important that you offer the person enough time to actually try out the software. For instance, I recently downloaded a free trial of a shopping cart software package. But because it was only seven days, I never got to really familiarize myself with the features and benefits of the product – so I didn't buy their software. I did buy Microsoft Expression Web software because they gave me a full 60 days to try it out. In those two months, I had built a website that later published online, so I happily bought a license to their product.

5.

Offer to accept a post-dated check or to only bill their credit card after a certain period of time – This can be framed similar to a free trial. The only difference is you're asking your client for a check or their credit card number – which may cut down on response a little.

6.

Make your guarantee specific – The more specific and clearly worded your guarantee, the more effective it will be. In *Getting Everything You Can Out of All You've Got*, Jay points out that "saying 'unconditionally performance guaranteed for thirty days'

is better than saying 'satisfaction guaranteed.'"

Better still is saying: *"No-questions-asked, 100 percent money-back guarantee anytime within 60 days if my product fails to perform exactly as promised."*

But even *better still* is ...

"No-questions-asked, 100 percent money-back, ninety-day guarantee if you can't honestly state that your face looks more youthful and radiant, and that your skin has better color and elasticity. If you don't enjoy results that good or better within the first ninety days of using our product, we don't deserve to keep your money. You have every right to ask for a full, no-questions-asked, on-the-spot 100 percent refund anytime you decide. And if you decide you want a refund, there'll be no questions asked and no hard feelings whatsoever on our part."

7.

Use a double guarantee – Renowned Internet marketer Frank Kern has successfully used this type of guarantee. First, he offers people a 45-day "Free Look" – he tells his readers he'll give them their money back should they determine for any reason the particular product isn't for them. No hassles. No hard feelings. That's Guarantee #1.

Guarantee #2 is what he calls "Putting My Money Where My Mouth Is ... "

Here is Frank's wording:

"This is crucial stuff, so pay attention: Go through the training and complete all the Action Steps according to my instructions in the course. If by the end of 90 days you haven't met your goal, let me know and I'll personally work with you for an additional 90 days. (I'll not only give you access to my private email address, I'll also allow you to schedule 30-minute calls with me if necessary.)"

He then takes it one step further:

"If after that time you aren't where you want to be, let me know and I'll not only issue you a refund, I'll also cut you a check for \$500 just for wasting your time. How's that for putting my money where my mouth is?"

8.

Add audio to your risk guarantee – In the voice of the signer of your letter, add an audio message that readers can play should they choose. The signer would introduce themselves to the reader, and then hitting on the main points of the guarantee, reassure the listener that if the product does not perform as stated, they will receive their money back "no questions asked."

9.

Take away your prospect's "big picture concern" – Jay Abraham writes about a guarantee a builder gave to potential clients. He told them that if their project went over budget, he would pay the cost, not them. He effectively eliminated one of people's biggest concerns when entering into a contract with a builder. His business increased because of it.

In their 2009 Super Bowl ad, car maker Hyundai offered the following guarantee:

"If at any time in the next year you lose your source of income, you can return the car for a 100% return of your money."

They called it the Hyundai Assurance Program, and it led to a flurry of new sales.

Taking the risk away from your reader is a key part of a successful close. If you take a casual approach to Risk Reversal, it can have a serious impact on your conversion rate and whether your client gives you another paying assignment.

If your client has no "Risk Reversal strategy," it's important you work with them in order to come up with a risk-shifting approach that you, your client, and most importantly, your client's future customers can live with.

Take away your prospect's risk consistently, and you'll soon become known as a copywriter whose sales letters bring in the results clients desire.

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2 Responses to "Skyrocket Response by Eliminating Your Prospect's Risk"

Are the guarantees permitted by the company offering products and service? Or just a skill in copy writing?

Guest (*emma*) – over a year ago

Hi Emma. When constructing your guarantee, as a copywriter, you can often suggest ways to your client on how to strengthen the guarantee. The client must always agree to what you're offering in your guarantee before you can include it in your letter though. Hope that helps.

John Wood – 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