

9 Marketing Tips from the Man Who Got Paid \$5,000 a Day



He never talked at seminars or conferences.

Yet companies were willing to pay him as much as \$5,000 just to hear what he had to say about their business.

You'd probably do the same, especially knowing he had a track record of building a subscriber base of paying customers from the ground up.

It's also why Dick Benson is known as one of the "founding fathers of mail order marketing." Some of his clients included Time Inc., Dow Jones, Hearst Magazine, Omaha Steaks, Consumer Reports, and World Book ... to name just a few.

And when he wasn't helping big-name companies grow their businesses by leaps and bounds, he was turning small companies into household names.

For instance, in 1954, Dick was hired by American Heritage Magazine to help increase their readership. And boy, did he help out in a big way. By 1960, under his direction, the magazine's circulation base reached 365,000 paid subscribers.

But that's not all. With Dick's help once again, the magazine's editor Bruce Catton sold a record number 250,000 copies of his Civil War book entirely by direct mail.

In 1969, Dick struck gold when he worked with the kitchen-table publisher of The Contest Newsletter. It went from hardly having any readers to a circulation of over 750,000. Eventually it went on to hit one million readers. At that time, it was the largest paid

consumer newsletter in America.

Right before his death in 1996, once again he achieved similar results with the alternative health newsletter, Alternative Medicine, helping it grow to a list size of 800,000 readers.

The reason why these numbers are so impressive is because Dick reached these circulation milestones using only one type of marketing: direct mail. You see, when he started out in the direct-response industry all of those years ago, email marketing hadn't been invented yet.

Now, don't get me wrong. I'm not saying email marketing is easy, but when all of your marketing is done using only direct mail, it means there's a whole lot of money at stake. So you have to be darn sure the investment will pay off.

Just how much money are we talking? Well, let me explain how the process works to show you what I mean. When a company mails a direct-response package out, they pay a printing company to print the sales letter, order form, lift letter, outer envelope, and business reply envelope, which depending on the quantity, can be quite expensive.

Then, of course, there is postage needed to mail the package. Most use third-class postage, or what is known as bulk mail, which costs .18 for each sales letter mailed. However, before the package can be mailed, a lettershop is hired to personalize and stuff all those components into the outer envelope, as well as trucking all of those packages to the post office.

On top of these expenses, a company also has to pay for the rights to use mailing lists, known as list rental fees. The mailing list is the names and address of people who are going to receive that direct-mail package.

If a company mails 50,000 copies of that direct mail-package, the total costs might wind up around \$25,000 or more. If the product being sold to customers is priced at \$29, the company needs 1,724 people to purchase it just to cover their direct-mail costs, or a 3.4% response rate.

Of course, we haven't even talked about the other critical component needed to get that kind of response rate ... a copywriter. And that, Dear Copywriter, is why learning how to write persuasive copy automatically puts you in the ranks of being an in-demand professional.

Although Dick Benson wasn't a copywriter, he was a marketing genius. And many of today's "A-list" copywriters have used his marketing wisdom to help themselves write copy that has produced above average response rates.

Today I'm going to share some of those tips, tricks, and strategies he used to achieve those record-breaking circulation numbers. And I'll also share with you two of my favorite Dick Benson tips.

But first, here are nine tips you can put to use right away:

Marketing Tip #1: You cannot sell two things at once. (Think Rule of One.)

Marketing Tip #2: A direct-mail letter should look and feel like a letter. The reader should feel as if a real person sat down and wrote a real letter.

Marketing Tip #3: How long should a letter be? As long as it needs to be in order to make the sale. But always remember, long copy works better than short copy.

Marketing Tip #4: A follow-up mailing two weeks after your first mailing will pull at least 50% of the orders generated by the original mailing.

Marketing Tip #5: Dollar-for-dollar, premiums make better incentives than offering the prospect a cash discount.

Marketing Tip #6: Tell a powerful story. A good story has a distinct beginning, middle, and end. Make both the problem in the beginning and the solution at the end dramatic.

Marketing Tip #7: Charm the reader with the truth. Be 100% honest. No hype. No hustle. Use a writing tone that suggests what is being said in the letter is factual.

Marketing Tip #8: Adding additional elements to a mailing package are more likely to pay out than cheapening the package.

Marketing Tip #9: Test what you can, but test to learn. The only way to get ahead of the competition is figuring out what works and what doesn't. And how you do that is through testing.

Now, there's a ton more principles and rules Dick developed over his 50-year career as a direct mail guru. You can read them in his book, *Secrets of Successful Direct Mail*.

But you can also do something else ... something I call the [shortcut method for learning the principles](#) of writing persuasive copy. And that something is letting our own in-house team of experts walk you through each one, step-by-step. Those experts are AWAI Co-Founder and Executive Director Katie Yeakle and President Rebecca Matter.

Oh ... my two favorite Dick Benson marketing tips. Dick believed strongly in testing different elements of a direct-mail package — but not just any elements. For instance, he knew that it was a waste of time testing things like what colors to use in direct-mail packages. It was more important to test the things that made a huge difference in response, such as headlines, offers, and list.

And my second favorite tip: Time limit offers, particularly those which give a specific date, outpull offers with no time limit practically every time.

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