

Blam! Splat! Kerpow! Batman Knew How To Make An Impact - Do You?

Any piece of advertising has only a blink of an eye to grab the reader's attention. Here are some areas to focus on, so that your creation makes enough of an impact to intrigue the reader.

Perhaps it's my age, but I still remember Dell comics, and whenever there was a fight in a Batman story, there would be loads of explosive expletives leaping off the page to indicate that there was a tremendous bout of fisticuffs going down. Thing is, you were always drawn to that section, where the action was going on. And if ever there was an advertising promotion for the storyline, it was one of those frames that was used. They were the attention grabbers, and they worked.

So what can we learn from this? When you write a piece of commercial advertising copy, you know that there are certain principals to adhere to. The all encompassing one is that you must attract the reader, engage his interest, and try and get him to read the whole of the piece, so that when he gets to the end - he understands why what you're offering is too good a deal to miss. Ideally. But initially, you have a very short time to hook him. Estimates vary, but you wouldn't be far wrong if you considered that for an html ad sent over the ether, less than 1 second should be your target.

Keep an eye on four areas of your communication - there are many more, but if you start with these and build, you can only get better.

Firstly, make sure that your headline has an emotive impact. And always bear in mind who your target audience is - life insurance companies are always tugging at the heartstrings with their "What if" scenarios, but that's not going to help if you're trying to sell a mousetrap. Remember that if you miss at this stage, the rest of what you say is wasted effort - it's already in the bin.

Sell the sizzle, not the steak. Age old, but always relevant. Talk about how this product is going to make their lives so much easier / better / exciting, etc.

Use pictures and images. The first things we humans get to recognise are images. It's deeply ingrained, and on top of that, what we like to look at before anything else are image of other people - faces, actions. Try and include pictures and or images that have some detail that relates to the point you're trying to get across.

Keep It Simple Stupid (KISS). Don't complicate the message or the structure of the message. Make your pitch simply, using words that are suitable for your target audience. For example, don't rant on about the scientific

research that led to your washing powder to be able to function well at low temperatures, and it's very good at getting out stains at ecologically beneficial temperatures - just say it gets your clothes clean and it's eco-friendly.

Keeping an eye on these points should certainly help you make an impact with your audience. If you've written something recently, take a second look and evaluate the piece with regard to the above. Rewrite if you think it's necessary, and see if you think your message comes out more clearly.

Finally, always remember who you are writing for. Do not seek to change the Brand identity with your copy, your client will not thank you for it, and may even reject your piece now, and not consider you in the future. The Brand and the Logo remain sacrosanct. If you really think you have a valid argument for changing this, now is not the time. However a covering letter suggesting a tweak or two to the Brand Image to the client would seldom go amiss - at least you're thinking about it, and that could help when the client is looking to commission the next ad.