

# Book Notes -- Bencivenga Bullets

## Bullet 3

Two most powerful words in advertising? "Yeah, sure."

Never make a claim bigger than your proof.

Use the "if/then" construction to counteract the "yeah, sure" response.

## Bullet 4

Most important question: What are we really selling?

You're not selling grass seed, you're selling a greener lawn.

You're not selling a boiler, you're selling a cozier winter night.

You're not selling baseball tickets, you're selling parent-child memories.

Don't stop until you've got a long list of answers and test an ad built around each of your best.

What position can you choose? E.g., if Henry Ford is selling "transportation," can you sell "cars as an expression of personal style"?

## Bullet 6

The 7-letter word that multiplies your creativity 11-fold.

SCAMPER.

Each letter stands for something you can do to get a fresh take on anything.

S = Substitute elements.

C = Combine elements, even oddly.

A = Adapt a headline, product, etc. from another product category.

M = Modify, Magnify, or Minimize an element.

P = Put to other uses. Who else can use this and why?

E = Eliminate one or more elements that have always been included.

R = Rearrange, Reverse, or Redefine any part of the product or process.

### **Bullet 7**

Offer compelling proof in the headline. E.g.: "When doctors have headaches, what do they do?"

John Caples defined effective advertising as "A believable promise to the right audience." Far too many copywriter and marketer focus on just the promise (the flashy, fun part) and ignore the more demanding challenge of building belief. But without belief, nobody buys.

Always ask how you can make your advertising more believable.

### **Bullet 9**

Be sure to answer: Why you? Why true? Why now?

That is, the reason yours is best, a reason to believe, and a reason to act now.

### **Bullet 10**

Use the word "because."

### **Bullet 12**

Help people get what they want.

Headaches, problems, desires ... these are your markets.

How to find out?

Keep an eye on bestseller lists, go to movies, follow your heart.

Triggers. The vast majority of products are sold because of the need for love, the fear of shame, the pride of achievement, the drive for recognition, the yearning to feel important, the urge to look attractive, the lust for power, the longing for romance, the need to feel secure, the terror of facing the unknown, the hunger for self-esteem, etc.

### **Bullet 15**

Monkey's paw. Make the first step irresistibly easy for people to take.

Don't start off selling the product. Offer something that makes it really easy for the prospect to say yes. For example, start by offering valuable, free information.

## **Bullet 16**

Don't sell horizontally, sell vertically. Don't sell "car accessories," sell "fuzzy dice."

## **Bullet 17**

The best product names have a benefit built right into them.

## **Bullet 18**

Building online success.

1. Carve out a niche.
2. Give something valuable away for free.
3. Capture email addresses.
4. Pile on the value.
5. Establish trust.
6. Don't sell hard.
7. Capture physical addresses.

## **Bullet 19**

A gifted product is mightier than a gifted pen.

If you're a copywriter, your job is to research the product thoroughly and uncover its unique advantages.

Don't think about writing a word of copy till you've done your homework.

Ask your client and their salespeople a torrent of questions, starting with these:

1. Why is this product made the way it is?
2. What consumer problems, desires, and needs is it designed for?
3. What's special about it? Why does it fulfill a consumer's needs better than the competition?
4. Who says so besides you?
5. What are your strongest proof elements to make your case believable?
6. What are all the product's best features and how does each translate into a consumer benefit?
7. If you had unlimited funds, how would you improve this product?
8. Who are its heavy users -- the 20 percent who generate 80 percent of sales?
9. What irresistible offers might trigger an explosion in sales?

10. what premiums can be tossed into the mix to press your prospects' hot buttons?

### **Bullet 20**

You have to combine what prospects want with the product benefit.

Example: Rosser Reeves with M&Ms. You should research your products unique strengths and see if these unique benefits can be the foundation of a unique selling message. Your research might discover that your product satisfies a different prospect desire than you might have guessed at first, and this could give you a fresh, much more compelling message to feature in your advertising, one that makes you stand out from all the clutter.

Melts in your mouth, not in your hand.

It's the most reliable copywriting formula ever discovered: A brilliant strategy (a message based on a product's unique benefits) + a compelling execution (an ad that shows how this unique benefit improves the prospect's life) = blockbuster success.

### **Bullet 21**

Most important components in direct marketing?

1. Your list.
2. The offer.
3. Your copy.

Checklist of proven offer ideas to boost your response:

- A believable reason. E.g.: fire at the warehouse.
- Sell only one thing at a time.
- But offer a deluxe version.
- Test.
- Make a strong guarantee.
- Test a price ending in "7."
- Sell a subscription.
- List a deadline.
- Offer early-bird bonuses.

### **Bullet 22**

16 rules for success:

1. Get out and stay out of your comfort zone.
2. Never give up.
3. When you're ready to quit, you're closer than you think.
4. Quantify the worst thing that could happen. Name it.
5. Focus on what you want to have happen.
6. Take things a day at a time.
7. Always be moving forward.
8. Be quick to decide.
9. Measure everything.
10. Anything that is not managed will deteriorate.
11. Everything looks perfect at a distance, especially competitors.
12. Never let anybody push you around.
13. Never expect life to be fair.
14. Solve your own problems.
15. Don't take yourself too seriously.
16. There's always a reason to smile.

### **Bullet 23**

Always ask why.

Headline formula: Interest = Benefit + Curiosity.

### **Bullet 24**

The Borden Formula for giving a great speech or writing a great headline.

1. Ho hum. Grab them
2. Why bring that up. Expand on your opening.
3. For instance? Give an example.
4. So what? Talk about what it means or what your recommendation is.

### **Bullet 26**

Focus on the 20% of your activity that is most productive.

### **Bullet 27**

3 copywriting lessons.

1. Effective copywriting is salesmanship in print.
2. Writing is not spontaneous creative combustion. The best copywriters are the most tenacious researchers.

3. Think things through.

### **Bullet 28**

3 tips for multiplying productivity.

1. Apply the 80/20 rule to everything.
2. Harness your early morning hour of power.
3. Ask your brain to solve problems while you sleep.

### **Bullet 29**

Selling.

Find out what people want then help them get it.

It isn't what you want that determine what other individuals will buy from you, it's what they want. And that answer can only come from them, not from you.

You're not capable of motivating anyone, no matter how persuasive you think you are.

Find out what motivates people. "Mr. or Ms. Prospect, what is your greatest concern about XYZ?"

Ask, do surveys, focus groups, sales people, etc.

Then show people how to fulfill a desire they already harbor.

A salesperson cannot change a buyer's desires, they can only demonstrate better methods of satisfying them.

Don't try to motivate. Find an audience that's already motivated.

Sample headlines:

To men who want to quit work someday.

To parents of troubled adolescents.

