



7 Easy-to-Write Headlines That Sell

Headlines are vital to the success of any advertising, but it's especially important for direct mail. Good headlines are like money in the bank!

If you're not a professional copywriter, writing headlines can be hard work.

Fortunately, generations of copywriters have discovered formulas to make the job easier. Here are seven of those formulas which you can use to craft your own headlines.

- 1) **Direct Headline** – This is the simplest and easiest headline formula. You just make a direct statement about your product or offer.

No need for clever copy or wordplay. The only skill required is to know what you want to say and the ability to say it bluntly.

Let's say you are selling a mulching lawn mower with an offer of 25% off. A direct headline would be something like this: "Mulching Lawnmower 25% OFF." It may not even occur to some people that something this simple could work as a headline, but it does the job.

- 2) **Big Benefit Headline** – Every product or service can tout a list of benefits. However, one benefit should stand above the rest.

This is often called the USP or "unique selling proposition." It's the one thing that makes the product different.

Recently, computer manufacturers began offering laptop computers that are about half the size of ordinary

laptops. While the trend has been toward bigger screens and keyboards, the big benefit of these tiny computers is their portability and convenience.

So a big benefit headline might be "Finally! A full-power laptop you can carry anywhere!"

- 3) **News Headline** – People are naturally curious and love news. By writing your headline in the form of a news announcement, you can create the same powerful appeal of the lead story in your local newspaper.

Your product or offer doesn't have to be "new" to qualify for a news headline. As long as it sounds new to your reader, it can work.

Let's use the same small laptop example. A news headline for this product could be "Announcing the smallest full-power laptop ever!" You could also create news headlines with the words "At last," "Introducing," or "Now."

- 4) **How-To Headline** – Most people want to improve themselves. By promising to show "how to" fill a need or satisfy a desire, you can easily generate interest in reading your sales copy.

The secret is to use the words "how to" and make the problem clear and the solution simple.

If your company sells work-at-home opportunities, your headline might be “How to make money working just 3 hours a day on your computer.” This headline uses the words “how to,” plus it promises to show people a way to make money without much effort.

- 5) **Question Headline** – Questions beg for answers, so they naturally create reader involvement. The trick is that your question must be asked in the right way.



A question headline should lead to a “yes” answer or it must relate to a major benefit of your product.

Here's a headline selling a self-help product that teaches English grammar to business people: “Do you make these 5 common mistakes in your memos?” For those needing this product, the question leads to a “yes” answer.

You could also write this headline to relate to a major benefit: “Why let poor grammar hold you back at work?” Here the question is rhetorical, but it leads readers into the copy which talks about the relationship between good communication skills and job advancement.

- 6) **Command Headline** – This headline formula is similar to the direct headline, except here you bark an order and tell your reader what to do.

If you're selling a new kind of vacuum cleaner, your headline could be “Clean your home in half the time with the new Whirlwind Sweeper.”

This headline is not only direct, it also makes a promise and takes an assertive, active tone.

“Drive America's most popular car.” “Grow your most beautiful garden ever.” “Get more clients for less money.” A command headline is one of the easiest headlines to write and lets you quickly convey your most important selling idea.

- 7) **Testimonial Headline** – You already know the power of an enthusiastic testimonial. By turning a testimonial into a headline, you can present a strong third-party endorsement and generate high readership, since people are drawn to quotations.



“My Guardian security system stopped a burglar dead in his tracks!” This headline for a home alarm system mentions the product name, provides a strong benefit, and gives a convincing testimonial. Any good testimonial can be used in this way, giving you an easy and effective headline.

If you don't have a real testimonial, you can also write a headline in the first person and add the quotation marks for effect.

The next time to start to search for ideas to build the next memorable headline, remember direct mail is all about reading.

If you can get people to read your copy, you can get people to buy your products. However, to get people to read your copy, you must write strong headlines.

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