



If you want to **WRITE**  
like a Marketing Pro...

You first need to **THINK**  
like a Marketing Pro!

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# Thinking like a marketing professional

I probably shouldn't compare *thinking like a marketing professional* to a surgeon conducting brain surgery.

But there is one major similarity.

The surgeon doesn't just walk into the operating room and make an incision. Over and above years of study, the surgeon has done a tremendous amount of planning for each operation. He studies the results of his patient's tests and MRIs, considers various approaches to the procedure and, ultimately, creates a detailed plan or strategy for that specific patient.

In addition, there's the detailed planning involved in having the right people in the room prepared to assist in the operation, with instruments and tools lined up in perfect order.

I'm sure, based on my description above, you don't want me performing brain surgery on you. But this scenario helps me make my point.

The surgeon needs to ***think about everything***.

That, my friend, is the exact parallel between the surgeon and the marketing pro. The surgeon needs to do his homework. As a marketing professional, you literally want and need to do your homework — to ***think about everything***.

The reason is that in the same way that an operation is more about the patient than it is the surgeon, marketing is more about the people and prospects you're speaking and selling to than it is about you.

It is more about satisfying *their* needs than about satisfying yours. It's more about solving their problems than yours.

## ***Remember history class?***

When you were in high school, the teacher stood at the front of the room. He spoke. You listened. In this typical communication model, the teacher was the *sender* — the person creating, initiating, and delivering the message.

You were the *receiver* (possibly half asleep in the back row).

Where did communication occur? It occurred in *you* as the receiver of the message, not in the teacher.

Where did learning occur (if there was any)? It occurred in you, not the teacher.

In marketing, the most important person in the communication process is the one *reading* the message, *listening* to the radio commercial, *seeing* the ad on Facebook, or *watching* the television commercial. It is the prospect, buyer, consumer, customer, client, shopper, or homeowner.

To become a marketing professional, ***you must always put your prospects and buyers first.***

You must know and understand the people you are trying to sell to individually and collectively — their wants, needs, problems, and pain. Then and only then can you become a truly effective marketing strategist and marketing writer.

As a marketing professional, I'm continually doing my due diligence to *think about everything* and to cover all the bases.

I'm grateful for this opportunity to share the following ideas with you. This eBook contains a few of the many things I think about in order to increase results for my clients and my own programs.

Before we begin, I should qualify that being a marketing pro and an effective marketing writer has nothing to do with cute, catchy headlines and clever copy (although there is a place for that).

It has to do only with your ability to take qualified prospects and turn them into satisfied buyers. It's not magic. It's thinking like a marketing pro. And it's seeing the world through their eyes.

# How I learned to write like a marketing pro

I learned to write the hard way.

Many years ago I owned and operated a boutique advertising agency in Cleveland. It was easy for me to find talented artists and designers. In some respects, they were a dime a dozen. But it was *impossible* to find marketing writers — writers who knew how to sell using *only* the written word.

There was one exception. Her name was Donna. I hired her based merely on the cover letter that accompanied her resume. I read her page-and-a-half letter, completely ignored the resume, walked into my assistant's office and said, "Mary, this is the one. Get her in here right away!"

Just a year or two out of college, Donna was an exceptional marketing writer. How she learned it, I don't know. Where, I never knew. Perhaps she was born with the talent.

The problem was that Donna didn't stay very long. Within four or five months, one of the larger marketing firms in the city offered her a position — and a lot more money than I was prepared to pay.

At that point, I determined two things.

First, no way was I going to waste time footslogging through hundreds of resumes from self-proclaimed writers who didn't bother to take the time to write and include a cover letter to sell themselves the way Donna did.

Second, if I wanted something done right, *I had to do it myself!*

That meant that I needed to become a marketing writer. But where to begin?

## ***Trial and error***

Instead of dumping direct mail solicitations into the trash, I studied them. Actually, I *dissected* them one by one in order to determine why they worked — or why I thought they didn't.

I spent the most time with long-copy solicitations. By doing so, I could see exactly how the writer stepped me through a sales process or pitch — how they created

excitement to make me want to buy and how they created a sense of urgency to make me want to write a check today. (Not all of them did!)

I read books and how-to articles on copywriting.

I tried to locate a marketing writing coach. There weren't any. At least I couldn't find anyone I felt could provide me with the guidance I needed.

It became obvious that my only answer was **trial and error**.

It really wasn't a bad answer because the reality is *the only way to learn to write like a marketing pro is to WRITE*.

You need to sit down with pen in hand or with fingers on a computer keyboard and write.

That's exactly what I did.

## ***What makes marketing writing different?***

Through my early successes and failures, I came to understand that while novels, how-to articles, press releases, scripts, news articles, feature stories in publications, blog posts, and short stories were and are respectable forms of writing, they definitely aren't marketing writing.

The difference is that marketing writing (sometimes called "marketing copywriting") came down to one primary and highly significant differentiator. The purpose of marketing writing is to bring about a specific "**intended response**."

Let me explain what I mean by *intended response*.

The goal of marketing writing is to motivate a prospect or reader to **take action**. That action could be to buy, call, click a button, watch a video, send for a free sample, schedule an in-home visit, or send for a free eBook. Because it's not always possible to close the sale in a single step, the intended response is to sell a **NEXT STEP**.

For example:

You may not be able to sell a \$95,000 sports car in a letter, but you could offer a no-cost, no-obligation test drive on a local speedway (to qualified buyers, of course).

You may not be able to sell a deluxe time-share in a single letter, but you could offer a deluxe weekend at the time-share resort for \$259.

*You see how that works?* Your intended response is a goal that's easier and more attainable. That next step is what keeps the transaction moving forward.

If you're seeing this as a process with one intended response after the next and the next, you have the right idea.

Each step moves your prospect or reader closer to reaching for their credit card or checkbook.

Not only is the goal of marketing writing to motivate and sell — to bring about that intended response — it's also to create a *sense of urgency* so that the action step or intended response occurs right now, TODAY, A.S.A.P.

That's marketing writing.

I'd say that if you possessed those two skills — being able to structure and communicate your intended response and to create a sense of urgency — you'd have a definite advantage over your competitors. You'd win more deals more quickly... and you'd close more business in less time.

I'd also venture to say that *without* perfecting those skills, you'd be at a severe disadvantage. Not only would you be losing business, you would also be leaving money on the table — money that your competitors would happily grab.

## **Marketing writing has LESS to do with writing and MORE to do with marketing!**

In time, I came to realize that marketing writing is both an *Art* and a *Science*.

The **Science of marketing writing** includes the basic rules, principles, and techniques you need to know in order to bring about that intended response. I'm talking about...

- Developing a compelling story
- Tell a story

- Eliminating pain
- Make your appeal emotional
- Creating and maintaining a sense of urgency

Plus

- Writing in the present tense
- Why your “call to action” is much more than the words “Buy now”
- Speaking to and answering objections before they’re raised
- Using clear, simple language
- Writing your headline last

There are many others, but you get the idea.

The **Art of marketing writing** is about applying and integrating the principles of marketing writing and then stringing together words in such a way that they *motivate* the reader to take action.

The art of marketing writing is too complicated to line item in a list of bullet points. However, I can tell you that it involves practice, learning from your mistakes, cultivating the craft, and, above all, ***learning to think like a marketing pro!***

In fact, the more you are able to think like a marketing pro, the more effective your writing — and the more successful you will be as a marketing writer.

This eBook is a great first step toward learning how to ***think*** like a marketing pro so that you can *write* like a marketing pro.

***If you’re new to marketing writing***, you’ll find the eBook and the information indispensable.

***If you’ve been writing for a while***, these seven ideas and strategies may give you some ideas to help you hone your craft.

In fact, the ideas, strategies, and techniques may help you rethink your entire approach to marketing strategy and planning. They could save you time and help you produce better results in the future.

Here now are seven ideas and strategies I believe will give you a considerable edge as a marketing thinker and writer.

# 7 Fundamentals for thinking like a marketing pro!

## 1. Know your target market

As a marketing pro, you must know and realize that there's not a product or service in the world that's 100-percent universal.

- Golden agers living in nursing homes don't buy skateboards (unless they buy them for a gift).
- People living in South Florida don't buy basement waterproofing. (No basements!)
- Retired people on fixed incomes aren't in the market for a second home in Vail, Colorado. (No money!)

It doesn't matter how good your product, service, or offer is; the reason they won't buy it is because they are well beyond your target market. They're *not qualified* as buyers.

It amazes me how many businesses and marketers have no idea who their target market really is, or where it is. Or they overestimate the size of their market as well as the location.

Yet the better you are able to identify and narrow your *target market* — that is, the people, groups, or businesses that would find your product or service relevant — the more likely you are to get the right message into the hands of *qualified* prospects.

In today's world, it is easier than ever to find those who are interested and qualified. Social media gives us that ability. Facebook advertising, for example, can be targeted based on any number of consumer criteria: age, gender, hobbies, income, geographic location, personal interests, similar products and/or services to yours, Facebook pages they follow, and dozens more.

By comparison, prospect lists available to the direct mail industry provide a fraction of that information. They may give you the size of the business, the number of employees, and the name of the CEO, but they don't interact with the market on a day-to-day, hour-by-hour basis. They can't tell you what that business' buying habits or needs are or what they're thinking about.

## ***Your Target Audience Is Comprised of Individuals***

I think it's equally important to know your target market not only as a group, but as *individuals*.

I recommend you meet face to face with prospects. Talk to them, listen to them, learn about them, and understand what your prospects, customers, and/or potential clients or buyers *want* and *need* — what they *like* and *don't like*.

It is only then that you truly have the opportunity to know your target audience. It's a tough job and it takes time, but the information you can gain from this effort is invaluable.

I know marketing people love to send out surveys. Consumers who liked what the business provided to them may respond favorably. Those who have been disappointed respond negatively or don't respond at all. They simply go away, never to return. What have you really learned?

It is only when you *develop a personal relationship* with the people to whom you're selling that you can truly understand who they are, what they like, and what they don't like. Then and only then can you understand their pain and know their dreams.

As important as this is, I can't tell you how many times I have received a solicitation in the mail that started out with the words "Dear Friends." (Notice the plural.) I guarantee you that when I received that solicitation I was not in a room with a dozen friends or colleagues who were simultaneously reading the solicitation. The writer was not standing on a soapbox reading aloud.

Reading is a personal, solo activity — at least initially. Sure, there could come a time when I'd read the letter to a colleague or share it with my wife. Mostly, however, it's personal. And it's close up. The message you create and put in someone's hands is 18 to 20 inches from their face. That's close. The same is true for a computer screen, smart phone, or tablet. You are writing to one person at a time.

When I coach and mentor newer writers, I often suggest that they *picture one person they know* who fits their target audience. Better yet, I recommend that they tape a photograph of someone they know right on their computer. I tell them, "Whatever you're writing, write it to them — as a friend or someone you care

about or someone you really want to help.” Believe it or not, your tone, as well as your words, comes through loud and clear.

Often, the greatest compliment I get about my writing is when someone who knows me says, “Gil, when I was reading this, I could actually hear your voice. It was like you were in the room talking to me.”

When you understand your target market inside and out, you become a better marketing strategist and a better marketing writer.

## 2. Know your primary and secondary value propositions

It amazes me how many marketers don’t understand the difference between a *feature* and a *benefit*.

This often confuses newer writers and marketers, too. Yet it’s vitally important that they understand the difference. A *feature* describes a measurable component of a product or service. For example:

The car has a 450 horsepower engine.

The oven cooks twice as fast as conventional ovens.

It’s nice to know those things, but it’s considerably more important to translate features into human *benefits* — what the product or feature does for your target audience:

You merge into traffic quickly, safely, and confidently.

You get dinner on the table for your hungry family in half the time.

The bottom line is that you always want to be translating features into benefits — not just in your marketing writing, but as you construct the overall marketing strategy that takes your product or service to market.

Features and benefits will always be a part of marketing writing and strategy. But there’s something else. It’s the concept of a ***value proposition*** or ***value propositions***.

According to Wikipedia, a **value proposition** is a promise of **value** to be delivered and acknowledged and a belief from the customer that **value** will be delivered and experienced. It goes on to say that a **value proposition** can

apply to an entire organization, or parts thereof, or customer accounts, or products or services.

The way I learned it and the way I teach it is that a value proposition speaks to the *problems you solve* as well as the *customer needs you satisfy*.

That car with the 450 horsepower engine solves a problem. It gets you to work in less time. It satisfies your need or want for a comfortable ride and it makes you feel good about yourself. (Status!)

That oven that cooks twice as fast saves you time, especially on those days when you're running late and the kids are starving (or so they say).

As a marketing pro, it will serve you well to know that there are *primary value propositions* and *secondary value propositions*.

Secondary value propositions are definitely necessary and important in developing your marketing story. As they say, you don't want to leave home without them.

The primary value proposition (one and only one) is what you believe is the *single most important value* your product or service delivers. It explains the one most significant problem you solve or the one need you best satisfy in a single word, phrase, or sentence — something that positions you head and shoulders above all your competitors and separates you from the pack of competitors.

Here's an example. I was retained by a mortgage company in New York to develop a new website. Typically, that's the way it starts. The prospects or clients-to-be always believe that they have a simple problem that can be fixed with a fancy new website.

Ultimately, I'm able to show them the importance of setting the website aside for a while and thinking through, among other things, what their value propositions are.

It's a time-consuming process, but always well worth the investment of time. After several meetings, the client and I found our primary value proposition. It's what we felt consumers wanted and needed most and what the mortgage company delivered — a simpler mortgage process and experience.

The principals of the company and I agreed on the primary value proposition and to communicate to the market with the words:

### ***“Your mortgage process just got simpler.”***

The problem we solved and the need we satisfied was that (at least in the minds of prospects) we had a better process and that this better process would streamline and simplify their mortgage process and their lives.

We included several secondary value propositions, which are evident on the home page of the website as well as in everything the company does: best possible rates, more than 50 lenders, no upfront fees, and more.

In mentoring new writers, I use this mortgage company as a case study. It helps me drive home the point of doing the important work first. That is to know the target market and its needs, determine what problem or problems we need to solve, and reducing that to a single primary value proposition supported by secondary value propositions.

In the case of the mortgage company, once I had the primary and secondary value propositions clearly defined, the marketing writing came easily. You might say that the copy wrote itself. Plus, the value propositions kept us focused on what we really needed to convey in our writing.

How did it turn out? The year following the launch of the new website was the largest, most successful year in the company’s history.

## **3. Educate the market**

In my book *How to Close More Business in Less Time*, I spend a tremendous amount of time talking about the importance of thinking through what I call an *ideal sales process*.

One of the steps in the ideal sales process is *education*. (It’s actually the fourth step following client attraction, rapport building, and information gathering.)

Prospective buyers want to know about you, your product, your service, and your qualifications. One of the ways they learn about you, your knowledge, and your competencies is through the education process.

For example, many years ago my wife and I sought a company to build some custom cabinetry. The configuration of the room made it impossible to use standard-size cabinets.

A friend referred us to Joe. Joe came to the house, discussed our cabinetry needs, and took a few measurements. He talked about the woods he uses and how he could match any finish. Realizing that we needed to know more, he invited us to his workshop.

During that workshop visit, Joe showed us samples of work he had done. He explained how he made perfect corners, how he selected the wood, and how he finished the wood. In providing a thorough education, Joe convinced us that he was the man for the job. We didn't need to speak with anyone else.

Truth be told, Joe was a lousy salesman. He talked too much and didn't know when to stop talking. It didn't matter. It was the time he spent educating us that sold us on Joe.

Perhaps you've seen this yourself when working with an expert or craftsman. They're not the best salespeople, but their knowledge sells and closes the deal. There's an important lesson in this, and it certainly supports the need for and importance of education as you develop marketing strategies and support them with on-target marketing writing.

Not every business comes face to face with a qualified buyer the way Joe did with us. But that doesn't matter. Education is imperative.

I think about an online electronics company called Crutchfield. They sell audio and video for automobiles, home audio, TVs and video, cameras, and more. Not only is their website filled with great product, there's no end to the education you can gain from spending time there. From staff and customer product reviews to videos that explain technology and products, they are always educating.

Quite honestly, that's all the education anyone really needs to make a purchasing decision. But I like to talk to people, so I call to seek additional information or to place orders. In that call the education continues.

The sales team is tremendously competent in terms of technology and the products. They have answers. They make recommendations. They offer alternatives. From product selection to special financing deals to the company's technical support and generous return policy, the entire call is about educating the prospective buyer. It never sounds like selling.

Some businesses are concerned about educating too much. They feel that it provides the prospective buyer with information they could use to shop the market

for a lower price or better deal. That happens. There's not a business anywhere that never loses a sale. You win some. You lose some. The key is to win more than you lose.

As a marketing pro, I believe that education not only helps you close the sale today, but establishes you as a credible resource in the hearts and minds of your target audience so that they return to you for continued education, answers, and solutions to their challenges.

I want to touch on one final topic in this section on education.

As a marketing pro, I believe that when it comes to education, you can improve your closing ratio and bottom line by following a simple formula:

***Never give anything away (including education) unless you get something in return.***

When you offer a free report in an email campaign, you could set it up as an instantaneous download, delivered with a simple, single click.

**I say NO!** Don't do it. Instead, require them to provide their email address and then send them the report.

You still give away the free report, but you get something in return. You get the name of the person who wants the report. You also get their email address, mailing address, or phone number. Most importantly, you get the opportunity to continue a conversation with prospects who qualify themselves by providing contact information in exchange for the report. (By the way, don't ask for too much in that first contact. Once you have the basic contact information, you can always seek more! Asking too much could drive them away.)

In my opinion, education builds trust. While you can never educate too much, it's wise to know when you've educated enough. It's like the salesperson knowing when to stop talking and to ask for the sale.

## **4. Eliminate any and all guesswork**

Each of us sees the world from our own personal, unique perspective.

That, in and of itself, is not a problem. However, it tempts us to believe that everyone else in the world knows what we know, likes what we like, understands what we understand, and makes decisions the same way we do.

That's definitely not the case.

Everyone in your target market is an individual. Every individual thinks differently. Some are fast studies and make decisions quickly. Others require a great deal of time to assimilate and process ideas and information before reaching a decision. Mix in those who traditionally resist change and those who need to analyze everything under the microscope, and you see the challenge.

As a marketer, you typically don't know who you're talking to or communicating with through your marketing writing.

My solution — the one I recommend for strengthening and building your competency as a marketing pro — is to make sure you *ultimately* answer *every* WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, and HOW question your prospect could or would ever ask — and to do so IN PLAIN ENGLISH!

I say “ultimately” because you don't need to answer everything in your headline or opening paragraph, but you definitely want to find a way to eliminate as many potential questions as you can in advance.

Some approach the problem with a section entitled *Frequently Asked Questions* or *Q&A*. Others separate the technical data from the primary solicitation. Your approach to HOW you'll eliminate the guesswork isn't nearly as important as making sure that you DO eliminate the guesswork.

Let's say you're running a print campaign. You publish your toll-free number and include “For additional information, call [the number].” Typically, you'll get calls and questions that are off the wall and have nothing to do with what you're selling.

However, you also receive calls and questions about one or more aspects of your product or service. Obviously, that's a heads-up that you haven't answered all of those WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, and HOW questions. You haven't eliminated all the guesswork on the part of your reader or prospect.

As a marketer seeking to eliminate guesswork on the part of your target market and qualified buyers, I believe that your job is to *simplify* your offer, your pitch, and your message. You can do this in the language you use. You can do this by

using examples, stories, case studies, videos, audio clips, testimonials that provide information as well as praise, and so on.

I believe that one of the drivers to eliminating the guesswork is to keep everything *simple*. Too many color combinations, too many shipping options, too many pricing programs and payment terms, too many of anything creates confusion and questions on the part of your prospects.

It's often difficult for marketers to restrain themselves. The enthusiasm of taking a new product, service, or program to market gets the creative juices flowing. Those creative juices tend to generate more options and alternatives that result only in the confusion of qualified buyers.

Keeping it simple, clear, and concise goes for marketing writing, too. When it's time to speak to your target audience, the language needs to be simple and appropriate for your target market.

As I was writing this section, I received an email from my top web designer. He's been working on a client project that required him to seek outside support for a system he hadn't worked with previously. He's been more than a little frustrated about getting a new system to integrate with the client's business. His email:

“The biggest problem I run into with technical people is that they seem to think everyone already knows their terminology and methods. They fail to explain in easy to understand words what needs to be done. The request to add the necessary functionality is woefully inadequate in order to actually accomplish it. I run into this all the time with software tech support calls. Getting technicians to slow down and use plain English is the toughest part.”

As a marketing pro, you want to eliminate the guesswork, eliminate the questions, and eliminate any and all barriers that would drive someone away from your marketing pitch or campaign without buying, simply because you left a question or concern unanswered.

## **5. Anticipate objections**

Do you really know why prospects DON'T buy?

They may tell you, “We didn't want to spend that much.” “It's a lot more house than we need.” “I've seen it priced 25 percent less at Acme.” “It's not my color.” “I don't think it's for me.” “I just need time to think about it.”

Those are *reasons* prospects give. More often than not, they're *excuses* prospects make for not buying, for not converting into customers, clients, or buyers, or for not taking the next step.

As marketers, we don't always know if those are reasons or excuses. Most importantly, we don't know if the prospect is telling us the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

In the world of sales, those reasons or excuses for not buying are called *objections*.

Ask any salesperson about objections and they'll tell you about the need to speak to objections *before* they are asked. If, for example, that salesperson knows that his product is the highest priced in the market, he can either lose one sale after another, or he can have a story ready to tell about the company's higher price points.

As he starts talking about his product, he could say:

“We are the highest priced in the industry. But there's a reason for that. We manufacture all of our own components in a brand-new, state-of-the-art facility here in the U.S.A. Our units last twice as long as our competitors' do, so that gives you up to six years of service as opposed to three. And we're the only one in the industry to provide a replacement guarantee. If the component fails to perform as promised, we replace the component at our expense — and always within 24 hours, regardless of your location.”

You see what happened here? By knowing the objections that may or may not have been spoken by the prospect, the salesperson — or you as the marketing writer — can speak to those objections before they're asked — and, more importantly, speak to those objections even if they weren't asked.

As a marketing pro, your responsibility is to know why prospects don't buy or don't convert into a sale.

You can learn this in a number of ways. You can conduct focus groups or personal interviews (not email surveys) with people who bought or didn't buy.

You can learn this, in part, by conducting a SWOT analysis — taking a long, hard look at your company, product, or service. You look at **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats**.

And you can learn about my approach in my book, *How to Close More Business in Less Time*. In my book, I walk you step by step through analysis of your current marketing and sales process, then systematically construct an *ideal sales process* and develop the marketing strategy to support that ideal sales process.

Once you thoroughly understand all the objections you could possibly hear from a prospect (I call them “points of constraint” in my book), your marketing message can speak to those objections in the same way the salesperson did in the example above.

Bottom line: Anticipate the objections. Don’t run from them. Face them head on and construct or reconstruct your value propositions to either eliminate the objections or turn them into positives.

I firmly believe that one of the best strategies for learning about prospect objections your business faces is to spend time with prospects as a salesperson (or accompanying a salesperson).

Being able to look a prospect in the eye, listen to what they say and don’t say, and push them to tell you more will provide you with specific answers as well as lead you in the right direction to discover the source of those objections.

One final thought: As a marketing pro and marketing writer, you must keep in mind that not all objections carry the same weight. If, for example, one objection is price and another is limited choice of colors, handling price is usually the objection that takes precedence over limited color choice.

Chances are that if you answer the price objection and eliminate it as a concern, the color objection becomes less significant and the prospect moves closer to reaching for his credit card.

## **6. Develop a single dominant offer**

Two men are in a meeting. One says to the other, “Let’s grab lunch, George. My treat.” One *offered* the other a free lunch.

A store owner says to a customer, “Mrs. Smith, I’m sorry we’re out of stock. We’ll have more on Friday. I’m happy to courier it to your office as soon as it comes in.” The store owner *offered* to make it right.

I offer something to you. In return I get something. George got a free lunch. Mrs. Smith got what she wanted without having to return to the store or spend more of her time.

The obstacle that's most difficult for would-be marketing pros and marketing writers to understand is that ***the offer is more important than the product you're selling or the service you're providing.***

You have a great product. It's filled with a number of valuable benefits that consumers really appreciate. But it sits on the shelf. By creating an offer separate and apart from the product or service itself, you provide (or incentivize) the consumer **to take action TODAY!**

- Buy one, get one free
- Free shipping when you order before March 30
- Your choice of premium colors at no additional charge

These often seemingly pedestrian motivators work. They appeal to *human greed*. "I want to save money."

They eliminate the *fear of loss* — of losing out on something special. "I've been thinking about this product. I know this offer won't last. I'll order today because it could be gone tomorrow."

Offers also provide a *time-sensitive reason* to order. Simply by adding a termination date to the offer, you are communicating the necessity of the prospect taking action today.

Offers can also help *control behavior*. "Save an extra 10% when you use your MasterCard" tells your prospect exactly which credit card you prefer. In a good-better-best situation, I can use it to help up-sell from good to better or from better to best. That's the epitome of controlling behavior.

Too many offers in the same solicitation get in the way of each other. In my work as a marketing consultant and strategist, I focus on developing a single powerful and highly valuable dominant offer that motivates the prospect to take immediate action.

I also strive to keep my offer extremely simple. As with the need for eliminating the guesswork, I want to make sure the buyer understands the offer and exactly how that offer favorably affects them.

In the event that the primary offer has additional components, I handle this by creating what I call my list of “You gets.”

My primary offer is “Try the service FREE for 90 days.” Here’s how it might look to a prospect when I provide the “You gets.”

Try the service FREE for 90 days

You Get...

- Free setup
- Free training
- Unlimited access to the service
- 20% off printed materials

As a marketing pro who needs to build marketing writing skills, you’ll spend a great deal of time thinking about, working through, and testing offers.

While some may look at this as being incidental to the product or service being offered, you now know that’s not the case. The offer is more important than the product or service being offered because it is the driver, the hook, the reason to take action — whether that action is to buy, order, call, sign up, or click the button.

## **7. Continually ask for the sale**

When I teach or mentor marketing writers, I give homework assignments. I do that for several reasons.

First, you can’t learn to become a marketing writer unless you write.

Second, you can’t learn to become a truly effective marketing writer unless you’re paying attention to what other marketing pros are doing. (By the way, not every writer does it well, but there is value in studying both the good and the not-so-good.)

So here’s your homework assignment.

Set your alarm clock for 2:00 a.m. (Yes, two o’clock in the morning).

Turn on the television and seek out a 30-minute infomercial.

Count how many times they talk about the offer and the “You gets.” Count the number of times they give you the phone number and website address and *ask for the sale*.

In many cases, that first *asking for the sale* or *call to action* comes within the first two to four minutes. The producers want to make sure that you know what the value of their product or service is and, most importantly, the importance of taking action — even in the wee hours of the morning!

The more you study infomercials, the more you’ll see they follow a format. There’s a tremendous amount of *repetition*.

Watch carefully. If it’s a 30-minute infomercial, you’re probably watching six five-minute commercials. Each of these five-minute segments talks about the product and the offer, and urges an immediate response on your part.

When my colleagues and I build a website or long-copy printed solicitations, we don’t bury an innocuous “For more information, call 800-555-5555” at the bottom of the last page. We are continually asking for the sale — to take the next important step in coming closer to an ultimate sale. We are continually looking for a *psychological* and *emotional* buy-in before we ask for a credit card.

## **Think about everything**

At the beginning of this eBook, I drew a comparison between a brain surgeon needing to *think about everything* and the marketing professional’s need to *think about everything*.

In this eBook, I opened the door to some of the *everything’s* you need to think about. I shared ideas regarding the importance of knowing your target market, the importance of primary and secondary value propositions, why educating the market is a sound strategy, and the importance of eliminating any and all guesswork.

I also touched on the need for marketers to adopt a favorite technique from the world of sales and to anticipate objections, why it’s important to develop a single dominant offer, and why it’s important to continually ask for the sale.

Unfortunately, that's not *everything*. But it's a good start. It's a glimpse into understanding the relationship of thinking like a marketing pro in order to become a more effective marketing writer.

## **Do you have what it takes?**

I believe that anyone with a strong desire to learn can become a better marketer.

You may not become a marketing pro overnight, but with study and some coaching and guidance, I know that you can become a *better* marketer — a better marketing *thinker* and *strategist*.

You learn to replace your personal opinions with an informed and educated rationale for what you're doing, how you're doing it, and why you're doing it.

The same is true for marketing writing. You may never hold the top spot in the creative department of a New York advertising agency, and you may never want to. But with study, coaching, guidance, and a lot of practice, you can become a significantly better marketing writer.

The principles — the *science* — can be learned quickly. I addressed some of those in my eBook. The *art* of marketing writing takes a little more time, but it's well worth the investment.

So what's next for you? Do you put this eBook on the shelf or file it away with your writing dream? Or do you make a personal commitment to become a truly great marketing writer by taking the next step?

## **Take the next step now!**

If you're serious about becoming a better marketer, a better marketing strategist, and a better marketing writer, I may be able to help you.

I mentor only highly motivated people who want to become successful marketing writers. My mentoring is one-on-one mentoring. It's not a group program and it's not an online or self-study course. It's you and I working together. I transfer my years of knowledge and experience to you by personally guiding and directing you.

If you're deadly serious about becoming a highly effective marketing writer, or if you're having some success as a marketing writer and you want to take it to the next level, you and I should have a conversation.

Here's how I'd like to begin the process.

Send me a letter (via email) at [GilEfron@ProfitAbilityInstitute.com](mailto:GilEfron@ProfitAbilityInstitute.com).

I'm not looking for a resume and, in fact, I don't want one. I want a *real* letter in which you tell me about yourself — your current situation, your dreams as a marketing strategist and/or writer, and where you are in your writing career. Be sure to include your contact information.

I'm usually able to respond within 24 to 48 hours. When I do, we'll set a time for a phone conversation. We'll discuss your needs, come up with a plan for working together, and talk about fees. (I do my best to keep it very affordable.)

As I said, this is not a packaged program. It is one-on-one mentoring. I custom design a program specifically for you. Then I personally work with you and guide you every step of the way.

There are two catches.

First, I love mentoring, but it takes a lot of my time. I have many other things on my plate. So I choose to work with only one or two people at a time. The advantage is that when we work together, you get my undivided attention.

Second, I won't and can't work with people who want to waste my time or theirs or who are looking for a quick fix solution to a problem they may not fully understand.

The next step is up to you. You can put this eBook on the shelf or file it away with your writing dream.

Or you can make a personal commitment to become a truly great marketing writer and thinker by taking the next step — sending a letter via email to me at [GilEfron@ProfitAbilityInstitute.com](mailto:GilEfron@ProfitAbilityInstitute.com) and telling me about yourself, your current situation, your dreams as a marketing writer, and where you are in your writing career.

Until then, thanks for taking the time to visit with me. I hope to hear from you very soon.

# About the Author

Business and marketing strategist and advisor GIL EFFRON is founder and CEO of the **Profitability Institute, Inc.**, a Tampa-based coaching and consulting firm dedicated to helping business owners, CEOs, and leadership teams successfully tackle urgent challenges, improve organizational efficiency, and map winning strategies for future growth and profitability.

He also heads **The Strategic Marketing Team**, a division of ProfitAbility Institute devoted to marketing and dedicated to helping businesses close more business and more profitable business in less time, and to developing lifetime customer relationships.

Gil is also the author of *How to Close More Business in Less Time* and *How to Give Your Business an Extreme Marketing Makeover*. He is an active blogger and a proficient marketing writer. Gil has written and published hundreds of articles on marketing and the sales process.

He holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Cincinnati and a master's degree from Michigan State University. He has pursued additional post-graduate studies at Ohio State University.