



Internet Marketing Money-Generator



The Newsletter for Online Entrepreneurs

Magic-less Words that Cost You Riches

In the summer of 1995, when I got started in information publishing, there were two products that launched me - and both were written and published by the legendary Ted Nicholas. The first was a 3-ring binder book entitled **How to Publish a Book and Sell a Million Copies** that came along with a set of 20 audio cassettes taken from one of Ted's LIVE seminars. The second was a paperback entitled **Magic Words That Bring You Riches**.

Both books were tremendous for writing a book that looks and smells like a book - as well as for teaching you how to write great space ads and salesletters. They did not, however, teach you how to create a 3-ring binder book and set of audio or video that sells for far more than a bookstore looking book. Nor did they cover the subject of this newsletter: "Magic-less Words that Cost You Riches."

This is not a slam on Ted, however. His books delivered what he promised, and then some. I believe history speaks tomes about the value I derived from my purchases. At the same time, I want to teach you some of the most valuable information I ever learned about writing - information I came across BEFORE I became an information entrepreneur.

First, there were three books I read that I think you'll find of tremendous value - if you get them, read them and apply the wisdom contained within.

The Elements of Style by William Strunk

On Writing Well by William Zinsser

The 28 Biggest Writing Blunders (And How to Avoid Them)
by William Noble

Second, in the fall of 1989, I listened to a speech on business writing given at a National Speaker's Association breakfast being held in San Jose,

California. I do not remember the person's name - but I do recall her being a professor at Arizona State University. On most occasions I would disqualify what university professors have to say about writing because they aren't marketers or copywriters. Their "correct" English language can and will kill great sales copy. But not always.

This is important to keep in mind. There are plenty of English teachers who can improve your writing, especially when you're getting started. After all, as Internet entrepreneurs, not all writing is sales copy. Some of what you are asked to write will run the gamut from articles for online and offline publications to books, special reports, cover letters as well as replies to emails sent to your office. So it's a good idea to sharpen your blade in all these areas. Without realizing it, you may be losing money by using words that are weak.

We spend a lot of time learning what words to use - but if we don't have a list of words to avoid, our writing will contain both. To eliminate the weak words from your writing, let's take a look at... **The Professor's Hit List.**



The Professor's Hit List

When the professor ran through her list of useless words for business writing, I wrote faster than I ever have in my life. My pen never stopped moving. Why? Because the business letter writing I did contained many of the errors she addressed. I recognized there was gold in what she was saying - and with this in mind, I present her list to you.

Words to Avoid in ALL Business Writing - including email

1. We're pleased to announce
2. Obviously, surely, certainly and evidently
3. Just a note
4. Thanking you in advance
5. Enclosed please find
6. At your earliest convenience, as soon as possible, ASAP
7. Needless to say
8. In other words

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Okay, how do the words and phrases listed above hurt your chances of being richly rewarded for what you write?

The simple answer: Each of these words or phrases either communicates an unclear message, resulting in unclear action on the part of the person receiving it. Or the phrase is condescending, arrogant or rude.

If you discover that you have been using any of the words and phrases on the professor's hit list, don't be discouraged. These errors are easy to fix.

In a minute I'm going to give you some alternatives to the hit list shown above, but first let's take a look at a couple awful emails that contain these magic-less words and phrases.

Example #1 - Pilates Instructor

Imagine for a moment that the following email came to you from a Pilates instructor you worked with a few times.

Dear Zhannie,

Thank you for your referrals to Pilates.

We are pleased to announce that for the rest of August we are giving away one free training session for everyone you refer to us that becomes a client.

Thanking you in advance for your referrals.

Maria

Pilates Instructor

What do you think "the professor" would think of an email like this? If you think she would give it a double-thumbs down, you are right.

Why? For starters, my wife has never referred anyone to this business. So why do you begin your email this way? The only reason I can come up with is that the instructor doesn't know how to tell you she wants and needs referrals. So instead of saying this in plain English, she hopes to plant the seed in your mind for what she'd like you to do.

Next, the words "pleased to announce." No one cares that you are pleased to announce something. Yet you hear and see these words used all the time. In emails, on the radio, on television. "Tampa Bay Ford is pleased to announce that..." Who cares?

Third, the words "thanking you in advance." Why not thank me when I've done something? It makes more sense, right? The "thanking you in advance" line, once again, is used by salespeople who want to apply pressure on you to do what they want. It never works.

Before I tell you how to correct these un-magical words, let's look at another example. This is one of those emails better left unsent - except to those who are guilty of the crimes. And even then, it still needs work before dispatch.

When I received it I sent it to a friend with all the arrogant, condescending or inappropriate words and phrases underlined. I've kept them underlined for you, too:

Example #2

Hi Matt,

You know, I've been in business for five years and like any business, once you think you've seen, read or heard it all, something else comes down the pike which you never expected..

Anyway, yesterday we had a major problem surface that I want to clarify for all relevant parties involved.

Just to make things crystal clear if you have a friend or family member who is in jail and you'd like to buy products for him, please get your order shipped to your address and then take care of the order from your end.

Evidently prisons have rules and we are not liable for anything that happens with a package after we send it.

Is this crystal clear?

And needless to say wanting us to ship a blade to someone "in the joint" is probably not the best idea either,

Ray

The Blade Buster

Okay, here is my automatic subconscious response when reading an email like Ray's:

"I've been in business for five years and like any business, once you think you've seen, read or heard it all, something else comes down the pike which you never expected..."

Wow! Imagine this: I've been in business for 21 years and I still haven't even come close to thinking I've seen, read or heard it all. I'm not at the half-way mark; probably not even at the 80% mark. Each and every day I discover something I didn't know before. So it is amazing how some people can reach the state of almost-omniscient so fast?

"I want to clarify for all relevant parties involved."

Well, I'm not one of those relevant parties, so why am I receiving this? Send it to the relevant parties ONLY. Not to me.

"Just to make things crystal clear."

Why not make them clear from what you're saying? When you add the phrase, "Just to make things crystal clear" you're telling me you failed to make them clear before.

"Evidently prisons have rules."

Naaaaah. Are you kidding me? Prisons have rules? Thanks for enlightening me to this fact.

"Is this crystal clear?"

SIR, YES SIR!!!

"Needless to say."

If something is needless to say, then why are you saying it?



Practice Exercise

As a joke, a client whom I consulted with about the power of eliminating weak words and phrases, sent me the following email. He stole from the professor's hit list words - as well as a bunch that I gave him from my list. I've highlighted these money-losing weak words and phrases for you. A comprehensive explanation of why you're better off without them will follow.

Matt,

Just a note following up on our conversation tonight. Enclosed please find, per your instructions, the words and phrases we talked about that are useless, meaningless and overly redundant. In other words, the words and phrases we talked about that are a waste of space or that restate what you've already stated in more words than are completely and totally necessary. In the space provided below I have typed the actual words and phrases we talked about that are actually being used by actual Internet marketers. Obviously there are more of them than what you told me, but evidently you came up with some good ones. Needless to say, you've opened my eyes. So it goes without saying that you're a great teacher and coach. Hope all is well. Let me know the others you remember ASAP.

Thanking you in advance,

Edward



The Difference Between Weak and Strong

Listed below are the weak words and phrases Edward used along with an explanation of why they don't improve communication between you and your clients or prospects. I am also including a few alternatives that are much more direct and a lot more powerful.

Just a note - Whenever you write the words, "Just a note," you are inadvertently telling the reader that what you have written is not important. Using these words is NOT the worst blunder you can make; it simply weakens your writing. Look at the two sentences below and you'll get a better feel for how to improve this:

- A. "Just a note to tell you how thankful I am for what you taught me in your most recent seminar."
- B. "Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I wish words could express the depth of gratitude I feel for what you taught me in your most recent seminar."

Enclosed please find - This is not how you speak to someone in person, so why use this language in print. Write the way you talk.

- A. Enclosed please find a ballpoint pen with your name on it.
- B. Tucked inside this letter is a personalized ballpoint pen that I am giving to you to express my gratitude for...

Per your instructions - Once again, this is not how you speak to someone one-on-one. Why do it in a letter? Instead of "per your instructions," use "Here's the information you asked me to send."

Overly redundant - If something is redundant the word 'overly' contributes nothing to the sentence. It's like saying you're "more than happy." Finding redundancies in our writing is a job that never ends. Here are several examples I look for when I edit my words:

Sit down - sit
Write out - write
Run off - run

In other words - I'll never forget "The Professor's" line about this phrase. "If you write 'in other words'" she said, "you're saying that the words you just used weren't any good. If they were they would no further explanation needed."

Obviously, surely, certainly and evidently - Words that end in 'ly' are often used in a condescending manner. "Surely, you must understand that..." "Obviously, if you went to college, you know that..." "Certainly you know the definition of that word, don't you?" "Evidently, the prisons have rules and they expect these rules to be followed."

Not all 'ly' words are weak - many have a powerful hypnotic effect on the reader. As a copywriter there are many that you may want to use. Here are some of my favorites: ridiculously, incredibly, substantially, naturally, immediately, totally, completely - and at times, absolutely. I say "at times" for the word *absolutely* because many people are beating it to death. Instead of answering simple questions with the word "YES," they say "ABSOLUTELY." This may show more enthusiasm, but too much enthusiasm can be incredibly irritating.

Actual, actually, exact, exactly - The other day I received an email from a man about the magazine I'm launching in September. In the email he wrote, "Is this article for an actual printed magazine or for an online magazine?" If the word "actual" were removed from the sentence, you have an improvement. There are times when I choose to use these words - but 90% of the time, if I see actual, actually, exact or exactly in my writing, I strike it.

Needless to say; it goes without saying - These two phrases have almost as much value as "in other words." If something is "needless to say" or if "it goes without saying" - then why are you saying it?

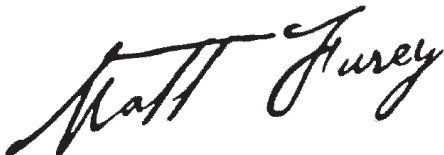
At your earliest convenience; as soon as possible; ASAP - These words, at first glance, appear polite and courteous. So why are they on the list? Because they fail to give CLEAR instructions on WHAT to do and WHEN. Send me a letter and ask for me to reply "as soon as possible" and it may end up being NEVER.

Here's an alternative: "Please reply within 48 hours to let me know you received this message. If you choose to move forward with us on this project, the deadline for inclusion is August 30 at 5 P.M. You can FAX your reply to us at 813 994 4947."

Thanking you in advance - "The Professor" explained this phrase to us as follows: "Thank people when you are really thanking them. To thank someone in advance is to push and manipulate. Thank others when you mean it. Not before."

Alternatives - "Yours; Best; All the Best; To Your Success."

Well, my friend, that's all for this issue. See you next month.



Matt Furey

Zen Master of the Internet®



From the Zen Master's Vault

Note: The following is a slightly edited transcript from a teleseminar I did on Copywriting in the summer of 2003. I cover techniques on getting yourself to write on command - without struggle or resistance.

Dean Duval, he's a guy who's been in the information publishing mail order business for over 40 years. I think he's 63 now. He said "To learn to write, you write."

Now, it sounds overly simplistic and almost comical when you hear him saying that, but his argument is when you learn to talk, how do you learn to talk? You talk. You don't have to get it right, you just start blabbing.

Mark Twain once said that if people spoke the way they try to write, everyone would stutter. You've got to remember this when you're writing copy. You've got to just write. You've got to let your fingers go.

You sit before a blank sheet and take a warm-up lap, literally. If you go out to the track or you're going out for a run, you might walk for 5 minutes first, or you might run at a slow, moderate pace for the first 5 minutes, until your body gets warmed up. You feel cold. Your muscles are tight.

But after that first 5 minutes, your body gets into a groove and you can effortlessly run twice as fast, and you're not even pushing yourself.

It's the same thing with writing. If you sit and start writing, no matter what comes to mind, you just type it up, and if "blah, blah, blah" comes to mind, you type "blah, blah, blah." And if you keep going like this for 5 minutes, all of a sudden, just like the guy going out and running, you hit your stride and you are warmed up. All of a sudden, stuff starts to flow and it makes sense when you read it later. It's pretty good.

But if you sit there and try to edit while you type, it's much more of a struggle.

Gary Halbert always says to imagine yourself in a bar with friends who, after you guys have had a few drinks and you're about 3 sheets to the wind, your buddy looks over and says, "Okay doc, without all the BS, what's the truth about fish oil?" And then you start talking.

And you don't talk like a medical doctor. You don't talk in scientific terminology that they don't know and don't understand and are probably even bored listening to. You talk like you would if you had to explain it to a 5-year-old.

I have a friend who was preparing for a seminar. She said she didn't want to insult anybody by using certain metaphors to make a point.

For example, talking about Internet stuff she said, "I want to teach them about bread crumbs. How am I going to do that?" I said, "The first thing you do is you talk to them about bread crumbs that they already know and understand." If you're talking to me about Internet bread crumbs and I have nothing to go by other than the bread crumbs thrown out on the lake to feed the ducks, I don't get it and my mind will tune out.

So a great way to start is to say, "Alright, anybody heard of bread crumbs? Well, you might be thinking that it's that stuff you throw out on the lake to feed the ducks. If you are, that's one kind of bread crumb. But on the Internet, the bread crumb is something totally different. Let me explain what it is."

So now, you're talking to people in their language, in a way that they can relate to you.

So those opening ways that I've just given you, the Dean Duval "to write, you write," and Mark Twain's "don't edit yourself, when you're all done you can go back and edit," and then Gary Halbert's "without all the BS, what's the key," those 3 things are huge.

But now, let me get into some of the things that I do. And all of those that I just gave you, I do those. But I'm crediting the source of where I learned them.

But what I now do before I start, in addition to what I've already given you, is before I write an ad or a sales letter, I take out a piece of paper, usually a legal pad or a yellow pad. And at the top of it, I write a want list. I want \$25,000. I want \$50,000. I want \$100,000. I want \$1-million, whatever it is. Or "I want a new boat. I want a new house. I want a new car." You write what it is you want.

So you get that in mind first.

Then, underneath that, you write at least one good question. And the question is, "What do I need to write in this ad in order to make \$25,000?" Let's say that's your figure. "What do I need to write in this ad to make \$25,000 in the next 30 days?"

Now, when I started doing that, it was amazing how quickly I started to magnetize money and attract it. I'm writing the sales letter with the intention of magnetizing money. I'm not only thinking, "I've got to write a sales letter" or "I've got to write an ad for my product." No. I'm writing it with a clear, focused intention on how much I want to earn.

Once you've written this question, understand you may not have the answer. And that's fine. What do you do then?

Well, in ***Psycho-Cybernetics®*** and ***Zero Resistance Living®***, they explain that your mind is a goal-seeking device. And when you have a clear-cut goal, you'll start being attracted to the people, places and circumstances that will help you achieve the goal, or you'll take the right actions or find the right books and whatnot to help move you in the direction. Other people refer to this as the Law of Attraction.

The other way your brain works is with clear-cut questions. You're posing the question to your mind. You're still giving your mind a destination. The only thing is you don't know what the answer is. The goal is to find the answer.

So what you do then? You go to sleep, you take a shower, a cold one, go swimming, go for a walk. You watch television. You do something that appears as if you are not going to get the answer to your question. Or that you're no longer searching for it.

What you've done, effectively, is you've relaxed and let your subconscious mind come up with the answer on its own. And it will.

Dan Kennedy talks about how much of his copy he writes while he's sleeping. He comes up with the ideas. And when he wakes up, boom, he

goes right to the computer. He's trained his mind to do this, by posing a question before he goes to sleep.

So if you keep repeating a question to yourself almost in the form of an affirmation, and you really want to know the answer to that question, you'll get the answer.

For example, this afternoon I woke up from a nap and I had a very clear idea of my headline, subhead, storyline, etc., for a new product I'm going to be creating. I called up a friend and started dictating some of the ideas. He says, "Oh, wow! This is going to be good!"

Part of the process of writing is to write something today and get up tomorrow and write something else, and you add to it and you edit it and you perfect it. And what you think is good today, you might think sucks a week from now or a year from now.

The process is ongoing. I have ads that I have repeatedly changed. And when I finish each of them I think, "Wow! This is awesome!" And then 6 months later I think, "Wait a minute here, I don't like that headline." I'm continually tweaking them.

So, always look for new ideas and new ways to make what you're doing better. At the same time, don't wait too long before you launch something, either.

When you've got an ad, a sales letter or piece that you feel is adequate and good enough to launch and bring in money, put it out there.

One of the things I learned back in 1995, that really turned me around, and I've taught this to a number of other people, is that every day you write 4 double-spaced pages of copy per day. It can be ads, sales letters, or it can be material for a book, newsletter, special report, what have you.

But if you get up every day and you write 4 pages, after 3 months you've got enough for a book. It gets you in the practice of writing all the time. That's key. The more you write, the better you'll get at writing. And the more you write and the more you critique and analyze your writing, the better you'll get at it.

So that's number one: Make a commitment to yourself that you're going to write 4 pages a day.

Getting back to ***Psycho-Cybernetics*** for a moment, it's not even so much as making a commitment, it's more about imagining yourself writing 4 pages of copy per day. Instead of using willpower and telling yourself, "I'm going to do this. I'm going to do this every day, 4 pages," instead of that what you do is you simply take time each day to imagine yourself writing. See yourself plopped in a chair, in front of a computer or writing by hand, however you prefer, and picture yourself doing that very thing. And you'll find that you're compelled to become that person who writes copy every day.

Number two, and this one is big, we're talking about the motivation

to write copy. There will be moments where you've got great ideas, you've got a great story, you love the idea in your head about this ad or this sales letter, but damn it you just don't want to write it. You find it excruciatingly hard to find yourself in front of a computer with a blank document in front of you.

I know what that's like. I've been there many, many times myself.

The process of writing, when you buckle down and do it, is not that hard. The process of getting yourself to write is hard. Forcing yourself. And I don't even want to use that word, but that's almost what you've got to do, that's why I preface all this by telling you to take time every day to imagine yourself writing. Get that self-image on target, and then it will become effortless. You'll go, "Yeah, I've got to get up there and write this thing." But when you force yourself to do it, it's tough.

So here is the way that I get myself motivated to write copy when I don't feel like it. I don't use willpower. I don't tell myself, "I'm going to do it, I have to do it," blah, blah, blah.

What I do is I picture in my mind myself standing in my office, with my arms raised up, fists clenched, hands overhead, head tilted back, big smile on my face, going, "Yeah!" And I see myself celebrating after having finished the job.

I don't even see the finished product so much, or the finished ad so much. I see myself celebrating after having done it. And once I've got that image locked in my head, it is absolutely effortless. I can walk right upstairs into my office and start cranking the thing out.

If I don't have that image of myself celebrating being done, writing is hard. But every time, 100 times out of 100, when I have that image of success locked in mind before I start, there's nothing stopping me. Not even me.

So that brings us to the third part - just do it. Number one, you have this vision of yourself writing 4 pages a day. Number 2, you see yourself celebrating, having finished something. Number 3, you then go do it.

Number 4 gets back to the editing principles.

One teacher that I did some training with about 11 years ago is Robert Fritz. He said that when he finishes what he's writing for today, he starts there tomorrow. For his warm-up - he looks at and reads what he wrote yesterday and edits it. And when he gets to the end of the last paragraph that he wrote yesterday, he's already warmed up. He's in a groove and can keep going.

Mark Twain once said, "I get paid by the word. Why write policeman when cop works just as well? Why write metropolis when I get paid the same for city?"

The same thing goes for writing sales copy. Keep everything as simple and clear as you possibly can.

Remember the Furey Maxim about writing: "The easier it is for you to write, the easier it is for them to read." Clarity is the hallmark of great copy. Great copy isn't that which is confusing, isn't that which shows how smart you are, it isn't that which shows what a great vocabulary you have, or anything of the sort. Clarity is the key.

So while you're reading your copy, look back and say, "Is that clear? Do you think if I read this to a group of 3rd-graders, that they would understand what I'm talking about? 3rd- or 4th-graders? 5th-graders? 6th-graders? That's about as high as you want to go.

I don't mean this in a negative way. I have a saying that I call the idiot factor. When you write information for people, you cannot take anything for granted. You've got to write it for the lowest common denominator.

Now, here's the interesting thing about this. When you write your copy so that even the idiot can understand it, the people who are smart like it too. They're not going to look at your copy and say, "My God, he's using sentences that a 3rd-grader could have written!"

Well, here's the catch. I have people who have said that to me. They say, "I read your copy. It's so simple, man, I figured anybody could do it." But when they tried to do it, they couldn't.

So, really, really work at making everything as simple and clear as possible.

I like to speak about the Daoist monks in China. They like to begin all creative endeavors and activities with deep breathing exercises. Whether it's writing poetry, composing music, writing a story, doing some artwork of any type, or performing martial arts, they begin with deep-breathing.

Sit in a chair and relax. And while you're doing that, breathe in very deeply, hold for a count, exhale deeply. And while you do this, you want to have an image in your mind of celebrating victory. When you combine deep-breathing exercises with visualization, the sky is not even close to the limit.