

10 "DO"s and "DON'T"s for Writing a Marketing/Sales Tip Sheet

By Scott Palmer

1. DON'T forget your audience.

- You're writing for salespeople and bookstore buyers.
- By the time they get to your tip sheet, they will already have read dozens of other tip sheets and will be absolutely *bleary-eyed*. They'll have little patience with hot air or high-falutin' language.

2. DON'T use big words when smaller, simpler words will do.

- Big words dilute the emotional impact of what you write.
- Always re-read the tip sheet and ask: Is there a simpler, more direct word I can use here?
- Caution: don't use a short word if a long one really *is* needed.

3. DON'T use long, complex sentences when short, simple ones will do.

- Always re-read the tip sheet and ask: Is there a simpler, more direct way to write this sentence?
- If you have a long sentence, ask: Is there a way to split it into two shorter, simpler sentences?

4. DON'T include irrelevant information.

- The purpose of the tip sheet is to *inform* and to *sell*: first to our sales force, and second to buyers for bookstores.
- Everything in the tip sheet must contribute to that goal.

5. DON'T speak only in generalities.

- Remember your audience: they're no "dummies." They know if you're blowing smoke at them.

6. DON'T try to include too many details.

- Hit only the high points in your "Key Features" list.
- Each additional point you add lessens the impact of the points already included.

7. DON'T lose control of the process.

- Authors put all kinds of things in their biographies.
- Determine if particular items of information will contribute to the goal of selling the book.
- Insist (in a nice way) on getting the information you need.

8. DON'T start writing until you have all the facts you need.

- Don't feel embarrassed about asking "stupid questions."

9. DO use parallel structure.

- Items in bulleted lists should all have the same structure.

10. DO make sure that the tip sheet is accurate.

- Our salespeople can't sell the book if they don't know what it is.
- Bookstore buyers must be able to depend on the information in the tip sheet.