

W26

“An adult chimpanzee may be smarter than most two-year-old boys, but that won’t get it into day care.”

—*The New Yorker*

Wednesday

Morning

Fax

from

The

Castle

Press

7 mistakes that sabotage direct-mail advertising

Refreshingly, copy consultant Susanna K. Hutcheson admits that she has made a ton of mistakes in her long career. She hopes that her candid confession will help you to avoid repeating them in your own mail advertising:

■ **Ignoring your target audience**

If your copy is not targeted precisely to a specific audience, Ms. Hutcheson writes, you — as she has done — are inviting failure.

Before you write a word, she advises, take the time to dig and find out who your prospects are ... their age and gender ... their hot buttons. Then you will be equipped to write to them in language they will understand and respond to.

■ **Mailing to the wrong lists**

“This is probably the most common — and fatal — error made in mailings,” Hutcheson writes. “If you’re selling books,” she says, “you want people who read.

“So don’t skimp on your list. You may pay more for the ideal list,” she notes. “But the returns will more than pay you back.”

■ **Not keeping focus on your goals**

Now, with dear-bought wisdom from lots of trial and error, Hutcheson writes down her copy’s objective clearly on paper, sticks the sheet onto her computer’s monitor case, and refers to it often. Keeps her on target.

■ **Stressing price before your offer and its benefits**

Never feature price before you establish what your offer is, and the benefits that accepting it will confer.

■ **Inadequate testing**

Let the marketplace show you the right price for your offer, and the best copy and graphics to articulate it, Hutcheson writes. Testing costs money and time, but Hutcheson observes, “If you do not test you are not going to succeed.”

“Test everything,” she urges.

She notes that you should test only one factor change at a time. Otherwise, you will never know which change triggered a rise or fall in your responses.

■ **Trying to achieve two objectives with one mailing**

“If you need to generate leads, don’t try to sell!” Hutcheson warns. And don’t expect a selling piece to generate inquiries.

■ **Not telling your readers exactly what to do**

Hutcheson says that most letters that do not pull fail to tell readers what action to take. Tell them, she writes — and tell them often in every piece.

Happy Thanksgiving!

The Castle Press — *your best choice for a printing partner since 1931.*



1222 North Fair Oaks Avenue
Pasadena, California 91103
1-800-794-0858
www.castlepress.com

(11.26.03)