

MARKETING *Benchmarks*

12 TESTED POINTERS ON EFFECTIVE DESIGN

- Make your material reader-friendly. Every element in your advertising should encourage readership, because if your prospects do not read it, naturally they will not respond to it.

Serif-faced copy is easier to read than sans-serif. And roman faces are easier to read than italics, especially in large areas. All caps often depress readership. So does reversed type. Always use at least 10-point type — or 12 point, if you are selling to older people.
- Jar eyeballs. You want to spur action — so use callouts, arrows, and anything else that creates visual urgency.

Secretarial-school graduates love to end a column with a period. Yet that depresses readership. Sentences that run on to the next column boost it.
- Set headlines above body copy. Headlines under or in the midst of body copy are novelties that rarely work. Even less productive: no headlines at all.
- Direct your reader's eye. Photos and illustrations should face into your copy.
- Stress key words. Use underscores, highlighting, boldface, or italics — but judiciously.
- Make coupons inviting. Stick to rectangular shapes, with heavy dashed lines on the top, bottom, and sides. Odd-shapes make clipping or tearing hard.
- Show people using your product. People do not identify with static photos or illustrations. Showing people provides your prospects with easy-to-grasp product size information.
- Set phone numbers and URLs big and bold. Your most-likely prospects urgently want to know how to reach you.
- Design envelopes to be opened. Some highly successful advertisers simply print “Open Here” on the back flap of a mailing package's outer carrier. Simple, but it works.
- Make your letters look like letters. Avoid using illustrations or photos in letters. Since computers came into being, the use of a typewriter type face has dwindled, in favor of other serif faces for body text.

Use one-inch or larger margins (white space frames your copy). Keep your paragraphs short — four lines or fewer. Indent each paragraph five spaces. Use single space between lines, double space between paragraphs. Use black or (preferably) navy blue ink for your signature.
- Design folders to be read, not to win awards. Most often — to the chagrin of some art directors — a simple, fact-crammed layout (even if not four-color) will collar more readers, and be more believed by them, than splashier graphic treatments.
- Make your order form look easy. If possible, use your database to fill in lines ahead of time for your customer-to-be. If you can't, make sure he has plenty of room to print his information. Create a full-size mock-up to make certain your form will fit into your reply envelope without folding.

“The art is in getting noticed naturally, without screaming or without tricks.”

— Leo Burnett



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