

The Red l e t t e r



I Give You My Words

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fredricks@qwest.net
www.fredrickscommunications.com

by Martin "Red" Fredricks
701-492-2911

Create the Vision

The ultimate goal of any marketing piece should be to create a vision of a solution in the mind of your prospect that points him to your product or service. I say *ultimate* because the sales process often can be long and complicated, with multiple contacts or marketing pieces required to close the deal. Well-written case studies go a long way to moving the process along.

Case studies can take many forms. The key is to tailor your solution to a problem your prospects are facing. If you can't, then illustrate a solution for a *similar* problem. You want them to think, "Yeah, that's like my problem. I can see how this person/company can help me."

Here's a format I use to make clients look like problem solvers:

- Company Profile – An explanation or overview of their customer and what that company does.
- Situation – The problem the company was facing and its cause.
- Critical Issue – The negative implications of the situation.
- Solution – What my client provided, and how it solved the problem.
- Results – Improvements their customer realized.
- Quotes – Quotes from their customer's key person about the quality of the product or service, and/or the ease of the working relationship. These can be powerful, because they're from someone who was previously unbiased.

Succinctly tell your prospects how someone in their industry has already solved a difficult problem with your product or service. Create the vision and you'll close more deals.

Five Marketing "Musts"

Catherine Franz, the self-proclaimed "Tennis Shoe Marketer," says there are five laws of marketing today:

1. *Attention*: First get it. Then, make sure you're speaking your prospects' language while discussing their issues and challenges.
2. *Uniqueness*: Present yourself in a manner that makes your company, product or service interesting, relevant and memorable.
3. *Value*: Offer value from the first moment someone hears about your product or service.
4. *Authority*: Establish credibility so prospects can like and trust your company and offerings.
5. *Relationships*: People rarely buy on first contact, stay in touch with prospects to build relationships over time.

Man invented language to satisfy his deep need to complain. – Lily Tomlin

The Good Word

But That's Not Right. And You'll Pay If You Do.

Here's one that's going to drive the English teachers out there mad. But then, they aren't grading my papers anymore, so what the heck. It's perfectly OK to start a sentence with the conjunctions "but" or "and".

Pause. Hear the screams...

Here's why: both pass the natural speech test; people often begin sentences with "but" or "and." And, if it sounds perfectly OK to the ear and makes perfect sense to the other person when spoken, then it's good enough to be written that way, too. After all, those are the bottom lines in effective communication.

As Robert Masello says in *Robert's Rules of Writing*, "Making your prose look – and sound – seamless means, among other things, using any conjunction you need, whenever you need it."

And that's a rule worth living – and writing – by.
