

*The Incredible Power of*  
**Frame-of-Mind Marketing™**  
*How to Convert Your Online Prospects into Customers*

by Maria Veloso, Director of [Web Copywriting University](#)

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## Chapter 1: The Cornerstone of Successful Online Marketing

What if I told you that if you learn *one simple marketing concept* -- that **from that day forward**, your online business would immediately generate extraordinary profits?

If you are like most people, I'm sure you're saying, "What is that concept -- and how fast can I learn it?"

But the fact is, *simple concepts* are the ones most often ignored.

Take the simple concept called compound interest, for instance. Most of us know that if you save a few dollars a day, and put it in some interest-bearing account, your savings will grow into a small fortune in a matter of years. Yet few people save money or take advantage of the *miracle* of compound interest.

Likewise, the marketing concept I'm about to share with you is so simple and obvious that you'll be tempted to take it lightly. But if you do, I can assure you that your sales and profits will always fall way below their potential.

This concept I've developed, which I call **frame-of-mind marketing™** is part marketing *psychology*, part *empirical* wisdom, part *common sense*, and part "**marketing alchemy**" -- which is the science of turning ideas into gold. Frame-of-mind marketing™ is not an entirely new concept, but rather a new **paradigm** that will allow you to do marketing significantly better.

### Why You MUST Learn This Concept Right Now

The fact that you're reading this book tells me that you are currently involved in Internet marketing -- or plan to be involved in it fairly soon. Obviously, you already know that words are the true currency on the Web. I'm sure you are also aware that because selling on the Web is *text-driven*, nothing happens until someone writes the words that get people to **click, sign up, read, register, order, subscribe, or buy** whatever you're selling.

When you learn frame-of-mind marketing™, it will allow you to acquire the **single most important skill** in Internet business, that when mastered, would single-handedly account for more sales than any other skill. That skill is the ability to write compelling web copy that **converts more of your online prospects into customers**. I have yet to find a person who has used this concept -- and not been blown away by its sheer power and simplicity. Frame-of-mind marketing™ will allow anyone -- regardless of writing background or experience -- to write compelling web copy effortlessly and easily.

Additionally, with direct e-mail marketing fast becoming the **most popular marketing vehicle** of the century, it makes even more sense to learn frame-of-mind marketing™ so that you can **maximize the impact of your e-mail** messages. Forrester Research reports that by the year 2005, the amount of commercial e-mail sent to U.S. consumers alone will grow 40 times its present volume. Therefore, in order for you to stand out in an ocean of faceless enterprises vying for your customers' dollars, you must learn frame-of-mind marketing™ -- the "silver bullet" for capturing the attention of your e-mail audience, and consequently **obtaining and retaining more customers** than you ever thought possible.

Marketing concepts may come and go with the times, but frame-of-mind marketing™ is a timeless paradigm that will never go out of style because it keeps up with the pace of the Internet -- and the **speed of thought**. It may well be the best **marketing intelligence** you'll ever find, and you'll be using this concept for as long as you do marketing of any kind -- both online and offline.

*Failure to hit the bull's eye  
is never the fault of the target.  
To improve your aim -- improve yourself.*

- Gilbert Arland -

Failure to make a sale is never the fault of your audience. To improve your aim -- you must improve the way you view your audience's frame of mind.

### What is Frame-of-Mind Marketing™?

Frame-of-mind marketing™, just as its name suggests, involves **marketing to your audience's frame of mind**.

**DEFINITION:** **Frame of mind** (in the context of marketing) is the *expectation* or *predisposition* of your prospect, as well as his *mood* and *immediate environment* at the **moment** he encounters your marketing message. That *encounter* -- which I also call "*touchpoint*" -- could be your website, e-mail, banner, newsletter, or any other marketing communication.

Whatever your pre-conceived notions may be about the frame-of-mind concept, I'm going to ask you to reserve your judgment until you hear what I have to say -- particularly about its profound consequences on your **net worth**. I promise that after you learn it, marketing as you know it will never be the same.

### Who Am I -- and Why Should You Believe Me?

My name is Maria Veloso. I am an Internet **strategist**, online marketing **consultant**, and **author** of *Web Copy That Sells: The Secret to Creating a Profitable Website*. I am also acknowledged in many Internet marketing circles as the leading **expert** in web copywriting. I am a **25-year veteran** of direct marketing and copywriting, and I've developed a **unique model** of direct-response web copywriting that has consistently been proven to sell a wide array of products and services on the Web.

My marketing career started in 1977 when I worked as an Advertising Copywriter for a subsidiary of the famed **Ogilvy and Mather**. My most recent designation was that of **Director of Creative Web Writing** for Aesop Marketing Corporation -- a major Internet marketing company spearheaded by Mark Joyner -- where I was involved not only in writing web copy and marketing communications, but also in scientific marketing, ad tracking and market testing. I've sold several **million dollars' worth of products** and services for my online clients -- oftentimes selling thousands of copies of a book in a **single** day, and sometimes tens of thousands of dollars' worth of e-classes in a matter of days. I've also written e-mails and marketing communications that have resulted in half a million dollars' worth of seminar seats, as well as everything from *consumable products* to *software* to *information products*.

In the 2 decades I've spent in the field of marketing -- 6 years of which were in Internet marketing -- I've observed the common **undercurrent** in all successful marketing campaigns. I've named it **frame-of-mind marketing™**.

### What Most Marketing is Missing

In marketing, knowing your prospects' wants, needs, aspirations, challenges, and problems are

an important key to selling to them. However, it is equally important to know your prospects' frame of mind -- that is, what your prospects are experiencing or feeling, what they expect (or don't expect), or what they're predisposed to doing at the particular moment they encounter your marketing message.

When you develop a sensitivity to -- or intuition of -- your prospects' frame of mind, you enter an **arena** that heretofore was reserved only for the greatest salespeople and marketers of all time.

Take a look at the **world's best salespeople** -- Joe Girard, for instance. Joe Girard was named "the world's greatest retail salesman" by the Guinness Book of Records for 12 consecutive years. At the peak of his selling career, he sold 1300 cars per year (that's an average of 108 cars per month). Joe has sold more cars than anyone on earth.

Joe, like most successful salespeople, possesses highly developed **listening skills**. Before he sold anything to anyone, he asked a lot of questions, and really got to know his prospects and customers on a *personal* level. He knew how to decipher what his prospects were saying -- but more importantly, what his prospects *weren't* saying. He had perfect timing, knew what to say to them -- and most importantly -- he knew exactly when the prospect was ripe for the picking (that is, when he was ready to buy).

Identifying your online prospects' frame of mind requires the same kind of "listening." On the Internet, attuning yourself to your prospects' frame of mind requires an even deeper sensitivity because you don't get the benefit of face-to-face interaction that reveals clues about your prospects.

### **Marketing is a Dialogue -- Not a Monologue**

Most people "preach" their marketing message to what they believe is a captive audience. The sad truth is that online, you can seldom hope to captivate your audience's attention -- or patronage -- if you fail to have a dialogue or a conversation with them. Having a conversation necessitates listening to your audience, not just talking "at" them -- so that ideas, sentiments, challenges and solutions can be exchanged. When you become adept at frame-of-mind marketing™, you become an expert at picking up clues that tell you loud and clear what the prospect thinks, wants, needs, or expects **at any given time**.

Here's what most people miss: Even if you understand what your prospects want and need, you simply won't get very far by forcing it on them through the old-fashioned interruption marketing. The amazing thing is that no matter how obvious all this sounds, most marketers continue to waste untold amounts of money by **interrupting people's preoccupation** -- instead of working with and around that preoccupation. They just don't get it.

### **Mini-Pizzas with Grilled Portobello Mushrooms**

Let me give you an analogy that will illustrate my point:

Imagine yourself on your way to the supermarket. You're hungry, you're preoccupied with the tasks you have to do. So you're determined to go to the supermarket, buy all the items on your list, run a couple of errands, and go home.

As you walk into the supermarket, a man hands you a brochure and says, "Could I interest you in low-cost auto insurance? I bet I can save you at least \$500 compared to what you're paying now."

What do you do? You probably mumble a quick thank-you and tell him you'll read the

brochure when you're not in a hurry. Then, you'll probably toss out the brochure in the first trash can you find.

Now that you're inside the supermarket, you have your things-to-buy list in hand and you're determined to check them off, one by one. The supermarket has over 40,000 items (also called SKUs or stock-keeping units), but you're not there to look at those items. You've got your list.

At the end of Aisle 5, they're giving away food samples – slices of freshly-baked mini-pizzas topped with grilled portobello mushrooms, sun-dried tomatoes and barbecue chicken. You're hungry, so you grab a couple of samples. *Hmmmm...these are delicious*, you say to yourself. Before you know it, you've put 2 boxes of frozen mini-pizzas into your shopping cart – even if they weren't on your grocery list.

How is the above scenario like marketing on the Internet?

Whenever you log on to the Internet, you have a purpose -- and your purpose determines your frame of mind. When marketers shove marketing messages into your e-mail box or your computer screen, you become annoyed -- and you delete the intrusive e-mail messages, close the pesky pop-up windows, and click away from those loathsome websites.

It's the same thing with the auto insurance salesman at the supermarket. He caught you at a time when you weren't in the proper frame of mind to listen to what he had to say -- even if you happened to want, or even need, what he was selling.

### **It's Not Just the Number of Eyeballs**

Many Internet marketing pundits would have you believe that "standing in the way of traffic" is the best way to get exposure for your product or service. In other words, if you gain visibility by positioning your marketing message where there's a lot of website traffic, you're bound to pick up a lot of leads and customers for your own website. Wrong! (*A lot of good that kind of thinking did for the auto insurance salesman in the above example!*)

This fallacy has caused countless advertisers to plunk down millions of dollars on banner advertising, only to find out that clickthrough rates on banners have plummeted from 5% in 1998 to as low as 0.47% for the top banners as of January 2000 (source: Nielsen/NetRatings).

In the brick-and-mortar world, few events draw as many viewers as the annual Superbowl. Operating on the same fallacy that marketing messages should be positioned where there are a lot of eyeballs, insane amounts of money have been spent by websites on Superbowl ads.

Remember, **it's not the number of eyeballs** -- it's the frame of mind behind those eyeballs that really matters.

### **If Today is Thursday, that Concept Doesn't Work Anymore**

The only thing that's constant online is change. To borrow a phrase from Bill Gates, everything happens at the speed of thought. In view of this, you must not get enamored with inert concepts -- or stick to what worked a year ago, a month ago, or even a week ago. The past does not equal the future.

Let's take a look at the frame of mind of the website visitor. Back in the late 90s when the World Wide Web was just beginning to gain popularity, we all logged on to the Internet in wide-eyed amazement. Advertising banners were things we clicked on because they were a novelty, and we were curious to find out what was hiding beyond each brightly colored, blinking spectacle.

With that frame of mind, no wonder clickthrough rates were quite robust back then.

But the Pavlovian theory kicked in -- and we learned quickly that clicking on those banners was equivalent to **volunteering** to watch a commercial. We started equating banners with advertising, and we started refusing to bite. With that frame of mind, banner clickthrough rates came tumbling down.

It's been said before, but it bears repeating that "On the Internet, there's nothing constant but change."

Frame-of-mind marketing™ puts you on the bleeding edge of change. Keeping an eye on the frame of mind of the Internet population is a better **barometer** of what works and doesn't work on the Web than anything that has ever been invented.

Internet statistics and information compiled by private marketing research organizations may be helpful to you -- but paying close attention to the frame of mind of the people that comprise your target market, i.e., your intended audience, may well be your best marketing research.

Now, let's take a look at how frame-mind-marketing™ works on the Internet:

Let's say you purchased airline tickets through a travel website last year for your trip home to Boston for the holidays. By virtue of your purchase, you are now on the database of that travel website, and you can reasonably expect to get a commercial e-mail from them every once in a while telling you about travel specials, packages, etc.

But what if, instead, they sent you an e-mail telling you about their new fare-tracking wizard that can track air fare bargains in real time, and asking if you'd like to receive free e-mail notifications on the lowest fares to Boston? What would you say? If you were planning to go home for the holidays again this year, you'd probably say, "Hey, that's a pretty cool service. Why not?"

You see, even if you weren't ready to make travel plans for the holidays yet, the travel website gave you a **good reason** to start thinking about it. And because you agreed to have them send you e-mail notifications, you're more than likely to use their travel service when they find you the bargain airfare you can't refuse.

This is comparable to the supermarket promo of offering free mini-pizzas. Although you may not have been thinking of buying mini-pizzas on that visit to the supermarket, you were enticed. Note that they didn't ask you to buy anything -- but instead gave you free samples that coincided with your frame of mind at that very moment, and you sold yourself on the mini-pizzas.

This is a great example of frame-of-mind marketing. The supermarket was cognizant of that fact that since you were in their food store, it's very likely that you were hungry. You were already pushing your shopping cart, so it would be easy enough to woo you into throwing in another item that wasn't on your list. But they didn't just say, "Here -- buy this!" They used a device -- an appetizing aroma with instant gratification (food) -- that was impossible to resist in your frame of mind.

TV advertisers understand that consumers are more receptive to food advertising when they're hungry, so they schedule snack advertisements late in the afternoon. Companies often run TV infomercials during the late-night or early-morning hours because viewers are tired, and their defenses are down.

Likewise, the travel website in the above example used its announcement of the new fare-tracking wizard to entice you to sign up for the free service. You'll be in a positive frame of mind when you receive e-mails from them in the future because you'll want to see what travel bargain they found for you.

## How to Gain a Selling Advantage through Frame-of-Mind Marketing™

There are 2 ways of employing frame-of-mind marketing™ effectively to sell your products and services. You must either:

- 1 Catch your prospects when they're in a receptive frame of mind, or
- 2 Create communications or devices that effectively **transition** your prospects to a receptive frame of mind.

If you've ever heard someone say, "Gee, you really caught me at a bad time. Can we talk about this later?" you get an idea of that person's frame of mind. What most marketers don't realize is this:

*No matter how good your product or service is -- and no matter how much your prospect may want or need it -- if he is **not in a receptive frame of mind** when you present it to him, **he won't be inclined to buy it.***

Professional salespeople know this. That's why they try not to schedule their sales calls on Friday afternoons -- because their prospects are already in a "weekend" frame of mind, and not likely to make buying decisions. They also don't call on people early Monday morning because most of their prospects are still in the "*Don't bother me until I've had my coffee and recovered from the weekend*" frame of mind.

On the Internet, it's not always easy to catch your prospects when they're in a receptive frame of mind to view your marketing message. Holidays and special occasions might **seem** like generally receptive opportunities to offer timely specials or seasonal bargains. Not necessarily so. Why? Because all the other marketers are thinking the same thing. So when all the e-commerce players jam everyone's e-mail boxes with all their "timely" offers, what happens? Their e-mail recipients "tune out."

**Emphasize everything and you emphasize nothing.**

-- Herschell Gordon Lewis, Advertising and Direct-Marketing Guru --

Practically the only time you know, for a fact, that a prospect is in the proper frame of mind is immediately after he has expressed an interest in your product or service -- not an hour later, not a day later. People's frames of mind are fleeting, changing as rapidly as their moment-by-moment circumstances. There is only a **tiny window** wherein you can realistically catch them in a receptive frame of mind.

Because opportunities for catching your prospects in a receptive frame of mind are rare, it's best to focus on the #2 method mentioned above -- that is, **create communications and devices** that put your audience in a receptive frame of mind. We've seen how this is done in the supermarket example and the travel website example above. Now, we will explore a way to stimulate the **reticular activating system** in your prospect's brain to effectively transition him into a receptive frame of mind.

### Attention Deficit Disorder is Rampant on the Web!

In my view, the entire Internet population suffers from Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). I use the medical label as a **metaphor**, of course, and do not mean to make light of the dysfunction.

**Attention span is the rarest commodity** in the information-flooded Internet public -- what with

about 15 million websites in existence ( 2.5 billion pages of content) and almost 200 million pieces of e-mail being sent out each year.

Those of you who are familiar with ADD know that it is a disorder that has the following symptoms: difficulty in paying attention, being easily distracted, having an inability to listen (i.e., seeming to be "tuned out"), and not being able to pay attention to detail. This is not unlike the average Internet user.

The challenge of online marketers is to find a way to break through the distracted condition of the Internet population. Medically speaking, one of the causes of the disorder is that the Reticular Activating System of the brain is not functioning normally. One mode of treatment involves stimulating the Reticular Activating System so that it excites the neurons of the cortex, and thus, brings the various systems of the brain into **balance**.

### Turning on Your Prospect's Brain

The Reticular Activating System is the "attention center" in the brain. It is the key to "**turning on the brain**," and is considered the center of **motivation**. It determines what we pay attention to. Understanding the Reticular Activating System is an important key to unlocking record earnings from your marketing efforts -- both online and offline.

Here's an example of how the Reticular Activating System (RAS) works:

Do you remember the last time you decided to buy a new car? Let's say you decided that you wanted to buy a Ford Explorer. All of a sudden you started seeing so many Ford Explorers on the streets than you've ever seen before. Why? Well, it's not because people are buying Explorers in record numbers. It's because the Reticular Activating System of your brain made you aware of them, when you previously used to ignore them.

You see, the RAS receives thousands of stimuli and messages every second -- that includes everything we see, feel, touch, hear and smell. It is not possible for our brains to pay attention everything. Therefore, the RAS filters or blocks out most of the messages, and allows only certain ones to be delivered to the forefront of our attention.

When you understand the **inner workings** of the reticular process, you can successfully accomplish #2 above -- because quite honestly, it's easier than trying to catch your prospects when they're in a receptive frame of mind to buy your product.

Now, how valuable would it be if you could get your e-mail messages, your website, and your other marketing communications through to the forefront of your prospects' attention, and rise above the avalanche of messages that their brains receive?

What causes the RAS filter to let some messages get through while blocking others out -- and how can you orchestrate it so that it serves your marketing purposes?

Read on and find out.

Click here to read ["So You Want a Website That Sells?"](#)

## Chapter 2: The Frame-of-Mind Marketing Method of Writing E-Mail™

I've often been told by clients that one of the reasons I write outstanding web copy is because I am empathetic. *Empathy* is defined as the capacity to **understand**, be **aware**, be **sensitive** to, and **vicariously experience** the feelings, thoughts and experiences of another person. If that definition sounds familiar, it's because it's almost the exact definition of frame-of-mind awareness.

The good news is that empathy is not a genetic trait, but rather, a skill that you can easily develop. The ability to view things from the perspective of your audience is not only valuable in copywriting and marketing, but for all social interactions. The more sensitive you are to someone's frame of mind, the more **persuasive** you can be, and the more rapport you can have with people -- and consequently, the more people will trust you and agree with you.

Let's examine the frame of mind of people who are in the process of opening their e-mail. The easiest way to do this is to *put yourself in the shoes* of your average e-mail recipient. **Write down** the thoughts that normally run through people's heads as they open their e-mail box.

1) *"Okay, who sent me e-mail today?"*

They're curious and eager to receive e-mail. [A recent AOL/RobertASW study shows that people check their e-mail an average of 13.1 times a week].

2) *"I'm busy, and I just have enough time to read the good stuff."*

They scan their In Box for: a) personal e-mail; b) important business e-mail, and c) other things that they have time to read; usually in that order.

3) *"Let me delete all the junk mail so that it doesn't clutter up my In Box."*

They are inundated with commercial e-mail, and free newsletters and ezines -- and their forefinger is positioned over their mouse, ready to click on the Delete button. [Americans receive an average of over 96 e-mails per week. Jupiter Communications reports that the number of commercial e-mails received by US consumers will see a 40-fold increase by the year 2005.]

4) *"My e-mail box is my private, personal space, and I don't want strangers and salespeople invading my privacy."*

They regard their e-mail box as a sacred place, and are protective of it -- inviting only friends, relatives, colleagues and selected business acquaintances to enter.

[Note that in #1 and #3 above, I included facts (intelligence) that support my observations.]

Would you agree that the average e-mail recipient's frame of mind is appropriately captured by the 4 descriptions above? Of course, the list would probably be more extended for specific audiences, but by and large, the above descriptions are probably universal, right?

It's a no-brainer. We all know it.

But if we all know it, then why do most marketers write e-mails that ignore this frame of mind altogether? Why do they ignore the value of reading their audience's frame of mind, in favor of their own pre-conceived methods of "selling?" For instance, why do they write subject lines that reek of junk mail? Why do they use "corporate speak" in their e-mail, instead of using a friendly, personal tone? Why do they send long e-mails that ramble on and on?

The cardinal rule for writing e-mail copy is to first review the frame of mind of your audience before writing a single word. But most marketers pride themselves in knowing their market well, and they proceed writing to the needs of their prospects, but with little or no regard to the all-important frame of mind. Do you see how this kind of marketing can backfire on you and yield dismal results?

Here's a simple exercise that will give you the absolute best education you can have when it comes to writing e-mail subject lines that are impossible to ignore. This exercise puts you smack-dab in your prospects' shoes -- or more precisely, in their frame of mind.

This is how you do it: Go to your e-mail box and check your incoming e-mail. You need to actually do this, and don't be tempted to just do it mentally and make educated guesses or you'll defeat the purpose of the exercise. This is positively **eye-opening**.

Once you have your e-mail Inbox in front of you, what do you see? You see the Sender, Subject, Date and Size Columns. Where do your eyes go first? If you're like most people, you scan the Subject column to see which e-mail you want to open first, right? Now, check which subject lines you're likely to open first -- and why. All the tests I've been involved in show that people are more likely to tear open those that have the **appearance of personal e-mail** versus commercial e-mail, and those that have a friendly tone rather than a corporate, business-like tone. Here are a few examples of each type:

#### Personal E-Mail

SUBJECT: Not sure if you got this?  
SUBJECT: sorry I goofed...  
SUBJECT: about your e-mail  
SUBJECT: Dinner's on me

#### Commercial E-Mail

SUBJECT: Avon Spring Specials  
SUBJECT: 30% Discount on Eyewear!  
SUBJECT: Holiday Bonanza  
SUBJECT: Save up to 70% off at Overstock, 40% at Amazon, and more!

It's quite obvious which e-mails are personal and which are commercial. And it's easy to see that if the subject line of your **e-mail looks like it's coming from a friend**, it's more likely to be opened first.

Now, some people may say in e-mail marketing, that's pretty deceptive because your e-mail recipient is not really your friend, but rather a prospect, a customer, a subscriber -- or just someone who has opted in to your list. Now, listen closely -- when you learn to write your e-mails skillfully (by using the frame-of-mind concept), your e-mail recipient SHOULD perceive you as a friend. That's the HEART of relationship marketing. That's the reason why you obtained their e-mail address in the first place -- that is, to start a relationship with them, allow them to get to know you, trust you and eventually buy from you.

When you get a feel for the **language** used in e-mails that get maximum readership (i.e., personal e-mails) you've won half the battle. This might not seem like a big deal to you because, after all, you do send personal e-mail to your friends, don't you? Shouldn't be a simple task to write marketing e-mails the same way? One would think so, but it's not. Somehow, we often try to be clever and creative -- and inject a big dose of "marketese" -- when we sit down to write marketing e-mail. Curiously enough, we lose our friendly, personal tone, and subconsciously switch to writing in a commercial or corporate style. That puts us way off-mark when it comes to e-mail communications.

There will always be categories of e-mail (such as business-to-business) that require a more formal language, but by and large, a more relaxed, conversational mode of communication gets a better reception than its stiff, traditional counterpart.

## Conversational vs. Professional Language

Some people worry that the casual style won't sound professional to their prospects and customers. You have to remember that the Internet is a different business environment -- with its own culture, psychology, mindset, and even "language." The frame of mind of the typical Internet user is one that expects, and is accustomed to, the "up close and personal" language that is prevalent in instant messaging and text messaging. There is a one-on-one, "in-your-face" kind of intimacy in e-mail that is rarely achieved in the offline world. As such, when you resort to impersonal, business-like language, it's the equivalent of keeping your e-mail recipient at arm's length, which is counterproductive to successful e-mail marketing.

*"Businesses that succeed are those that form two bonds with all customers: the human bond and the business bond. **The stronger the human bond, the stronger the business bond.** Connect up as two human beings before you connect up as buyer and seller."*

~ Jay Conrad Levinson, Author of the world's best-selling series of business books titled "Guerrilla Marketing"

Going back to the exercise of viewing your e-mail In Box, bear in mind that people's eyes are not uni-directional -- but rather, they focus on more than one thing at a time. When your eyes zero in on the e-mail's subject line, for instance, they also dart quickly (if not peripherally) to the Sender field of the e-mail as well. So the Subject and the Sender have to agree with each other.

For example: Suppose you crafted a subject line that says something like...

SUBJECT: Hey, was that you I saw?

... with the intention of tricking your e-mail recipient into thinking it's a personal e-mail. If the name in the Sender field is something like "Internet Profits Weekly," your otherwise friendly and curiosity-provoking subject line is **negated** when your recipient realizes it's a ploy. Above all, be real. Don't resort to contrivances because people have more powerful "b.s. detectors" than you realize.

There's a very thin line between creating a riveting subject line and one that is an **obvious ploy**. If you use trickery to get your e-mail recipient into opening your "enticing" message, he may bite once or twice, but when he **recognizes the pattern**, the game's over. He's likely to ignore all future e-mails from you -- or may even request to be removed from your list altogether.

There are no hard and fast rules in e-mail. When you do your own "intelligence" work by doing the exercise I prescribed, the frame of mind of your audience will immediately be apparent to you -- and writing subject lines that get noticed will be a snap.

## Personalizing E-Mails is Not All It's Cracked Up To Be

We've established that above all, e-mail subject lines need to be as friendly, human and personable as possible. But do they need to be *personalized*?

Just because marketing experts say that personalizing your subject lines (i.e., including your e-mail recipient's first name) makes your e-mail more likely to be opened, don't take that as gospel truth. Always refer back to your audience's frame of mind.

For example, having been an advocate of personalizing subject lines myself, I was in for a shock recently when I opened my e-mail box and I found 5 e-mails with the following subject lines:

SUBJECT: Maria, this Friday  
SUBJECT: Maria, will you be part of this test?  
SUBJECT: Maria, you're in...  
SUBJECT: Maria, your account  
SUBJECT: Maria, last chance!

The 5 e-mails came from 5 different senders. That was a real eye-opener. I realized that the tactic of using the recipient's first name as a way of personalizing the subject line had become so widespread. The overuse had the effect of "homogenizing" the whole bunch of personalized e-mails, rendering them candidates for deletion without reading!

The curious thing is that any one of the above subject lines might otherwise be an effective one for getting people to open your e-mail -- when it is viewed by itself in isolation. But when viewed in the context of the e-mail recipient's In Box, it loses its punch.

This may seem like a minor thing, but it has major repercussions in your marketing. When you consider that one of the most important aspects of e-mail marketing is *getting your e-mail opened*, you begin to see how vital this seemingly minor thing is.

What would happen if you don't take heed of your audience's frame of mind, and don't pay attention to the trends that emerge? If you rely on other people's intel, and just continued blindly using the same personalization tactic (as in the examples above), your e-mails will fail miserably - and you would never know why your response rates leave a lot to be desired.

Part of deciphering the frame of mind of your prospects is observing what they're "wising up" to, what they're getting immune to, what tactics are no longer working. It will serve you well to observe what e-mail spammers are doing. Spammers often resort to devices that attempt to disguise the fact that their e-mails are unsolicited (such as using language like "at your request"). Those devices start becoming recognizable to your audience, who then start ignoring or deleting the messages. If you notice that your those devices are beginning to resemble those that you employ, you need to adjust your subject lines lest your e-mails be mistaken for spam.

Sometimes we pride ourselves for being **sneaky** -- and for **secretly** using clever and slick tricks unknown to others -- until we find out that the "100th monkey" theory has kicked in and everybody is already using the very same closely-guarded devices.

### **Permission-Based E-mail Doesn't Give You the Liberty to be Bland**

I'm often asked by my clients whether it is advisable to put the name of the company or newsletter in the subject line of an e-mail. My answer is this: Permission-based e-mail doesn't give you the liberty to be bland.

Let me explain.

Much has been said about "permission" being the foundation of e-mail marketing. Apparently 92% of U.S. consumers feel positively toward companies that ask their permission before sending them information (according to a 2001 survey by Brann Worldwide, a marketing agency).

This information has caused marketers to surmise that the subject line of their e-mail must identify who they are -- in order to remind the recipient that their e-mail contains something that they've given permission to receive. In an environment where most e-mail recipients usually can't remember whether they asked for this or that information or not, you don't have the luxury of playing it safe by having such a bland subject line. The objective of the subject line is to give your audience a compelling reason why your e-mail should be opened **now**. Instead of using the all-important subject line to state who you are, you can use the "Sender" field to identify yourself.

Using subject lines that simply say, "Marketing Resources Journal - Volume XIII" or "ABC Company News" are a hard-to-break-habit from the early days of the Internet when receiving e-mail was still a novelty, and we were all thrilled to get any e-mail at all. That was long before the advent of bulk mail and spam which flooded our e-mail boxes. Consider the frame of mind we had back then. But now that we have an **e-mail glut**, you have to compete more fiercely for your e-mail recipient's attention, which is why those straightforward subject lines are now getting ignored -- they simply don't give the recipient a good reason to open them right now. At best, they'll plan to open your e-mail later when they have more time, but when they come back later to even more mail, there's a higher likelihood of getting deleted.

It all goes back to this: When you consider the frame of mind of your audience, **marketing decisions become easy to make**. That, then, facilitates well-conceived action.

There will always be e-mail recipients who worry about contracting computer viruses via e-mail. There is a school of thought that insists that if you don't identify yourself in the subject line of your e-mail, people might not open your e-mail for fear of viruses, but instead delete it. As mentioned previously, you can allay fear by identifying yourself in the *Sender* field. E-mail recipients view the name of the Sender **concurrently** with the Subject. You can also further identify yourself in the body of the e-mail.

### **How to Gain a Competitive Edge in E-Mail Marketing**

Forrester Research analyst Jim Nail underscored how important it is for e-commerce players to use e-mail to **create a dialogue** and **deepen intimacy** with customers in order to maintain the response rates that e-mail marketing often enjoys. He emphasized how starting slowly and gradually **building a rapport** that will allow more personal information to be gained can, in turn, help fine tune the marketing and sales message.

Creating a dialogue, deepening intimacy and building rapport **necessitates** an understanding of your prospects' and customers' frame of mind.

Once you've identified and written down all the aspects of your own list members' frame of mind, you are ready to write an effective e-mail.

The following technique takes the struggle out of writing e-mail:

First, write down the 3 words that best describe the message you're trying to convey. Not a 3-word sentence, mind you, but 3 individual words that summarize the thought you're trying to communicate in the letter. That could be a smell, a benefit, an emotion, a color, a mood, a texture, a sound, a flavor, an adjective that describes what the message is about.

For example: The 3 words I would choose if I were about to write a letter about the movie, *Braveheart*, would be: freedom, hero, and courage. Or maybe blockbuster, Oscar, and cinematography.

Those 3 words will serve to narrow your focus and keep you grounded on the subject to be communicated. After you come up with these 3 key words, start writing your e-mail letter, paying attention to these simple rules:

- 1) Focus on the frame of mind of your audience, and write in a way that appeals to that frame of mind
- 2) Write the way you speak.
- 3) Don't get creative or formal.

4) Write the letter as though you're writing it to one person only - - and that person is your friend.

Give yourself 5 minutes to write the letter, making sure you use the 3 key words in the letter. Don't edit the letter as you write.

When you're done with the letter, here's a trick that will make editing your letter painless:

After you write the letter, **e-mail it to yourself**. The perspective you'll get from this experience is **priceless**. You'll see first-hand how you'd perceive your subject line relative to other subject lines among which it is viewed. You'll find out if you'd pick it out among the rest of your incoming e-mail. When you open the e-mail and read the letter you wrote, you'll read it in a whole new light - - from the point of view of your recipient. With every sentence, ask yourself, "Is this something that I would say to a friend?" If the answer is no, revise the wording accordingly.

You'll discover the nuances of language, and you'll also find out if you've succeeded in gaining rapport and persuading your prospect into taking the action you want him or her to take. All the rough areas that need work will become **glaringly obvious**, and you'll know exactly how to fix them. You won't know the power of this editing technique until you try it.

### **Frame of Mind is Altered with Each Mailing**

When you send a series of e-mails to your list, their frame of mind is slightly altered with each mailing because your previous communications may have influenced their present expectation and predisposition. They may have warmed up to you and begun to trust you more -- or maybe just the opposite.

All too often, e-mails are written on the assumption that each e-mail gets the same kind of attention as previous ones, or the ones yet to be sent. You must never write "in a vacuum" -- or regard each e-mail as an isolated piece. You must regard it as a conversation in an ongoing relationship.

When you have a good grasp of your prospects' frame of mind at every stage, you are in a better position to monopolize their attention. Since you know what your prospects' predispositions and expectations are, you have the opportunity to find ways to engage them. For instance, you can use the **element of surprise** to delight or intrigue them, or find ways to arouse their curiosity in order to make them look forward to future issues with great anticipation.

There are so many variations you can employ. Just consider the unique frame of mind of your own list members, and you can come up with amazing ideas that may have never occurred to you before -- and that are totally **custom-made** for your list.

### **Arousing the Brain's Reticular Activating System through E-Mail**

Earlier on, I told you about the Reticular Activating System (RAS) of the brain that filters the thousands of messages it receives every second, and only allows certain messages to come to the forefront of our attention.

Following are a few ways you can stimulate your prospect's RAS in order to transition him to a receptive frame of mind:

1) Ask your e-mail recipient to **write something down**. It is scientifically proven that the act of writing something down helps trigger the brain's Reticular Activating System. What you ask them to write down will depend, of course, on the nature of the product or service that you sell.

For example: I have a client who is a Director of a discount buying club which offers up to 18% in rebates whenever members purchase from among 200+ online stores with over 250,000

products. One of the e-mails I wrote to encourage members to shop included the following wording:

"I'm sure you're eager to get started, so make a list of all the things you need to buy within the next 3 months, such as...

- \* Office supplies that you've been meaning to buy
- \* Books you've always wanted
- \* A new outfit for a special occasion
- \* A birthday present
- \* Flowers you need to send
- \* Toys for a child's birthday party
- \* A new computer printer, a DVD player or other appliance
- \* Etcetera

" Go ahead and write them all down."

Again, the act of writing down the items puts those items in the forefront of the members' attention, thereby putting them in a receptive frame of mind for the following message.

" Now, with your DHS Club personal I.D. number in hand, go to <http://www.ClubShop.com> -- and go shopping! [Click on the "Go Shopping" tab.]

" Use the powerful search wizard to find the items on your list. There are over 250,000 items -- you're sure to find everything on your list there.

" Buy everything you need and get all your shopping done in minutes. Then just sit back, watch the money grow in your DHS Club account, and at the end of the month, you'll receive your rebate check. What could be easier?"

Need proof that this works? Think back on your own experience. Whenever you had a written list of things you needed to buy (whether you carried that list with you or not), your mind **subconsciously** zeroed in on those items when they came into your field of vision, didn't they? Your mind would have just "tuned out" those same items had you not written them down.

By having your prospects write something down (that has something to do with your product or service), you help their RAS to deliver to their brains whatever you want them to pay attention to, thereby increasing the likelihood of driving them toward making a purchase.

2) Offer your e-mail recipients a small activity that's entertaining or interesting to do. This would provide a refreshing **diversion** from the usual barrage of commercial e-mail they normally get. Make sure the activity leads in to a well-crafted marketing message that invites them to click through to your website, or otherwise carry them along your intended sales path. Here's the key: When you lead off with a non-commercial activity as suggested, you get them to agree to something. When you get them to subsequently click through to your website, that's another "yes." You are then effectively breaking up a large buying decision into several manageable steps to which they can say "Yes!"

Professional sales people use this technique all the time -- getting prospects to agree to small things before asking for the "yes" on the real sale.

I know an Internet marketer who makes it his business to find "cool things" to do on the Internet -- for the purpose of telling his list members about them as an ice breaker. In one of his e-mails, he

invited them to do something fun -- that is, see their website translated into one of several comic dialects like Red Neck, Jive, Elmer Fudd, Cockney or Pig Latin, among others. The lure of seeing their websites in a humorous light was irresistible to the majority of this marketer's list members. So when his e-mail recipients responded by taking him up on this entertaining diversion, he not only got them to laugh, but also used the rapport he created to skillfully lead them to his own website.

Now, imagine the frame of mind of those same people the next time he sends them an e-mail!

One word of caution: Don't use humor for humor's sake. It should match the relationship you've developed with your audience, and must have a mechanism that allows you to segue into your marketing message.

3) Send an e-mail that invites your recipient to participate in a quick poll or a one-question survey. This is an **involvement device** that gets your e-mail recipient to pay attention to a subject on which you want him to focus. The subject of the poll or survey should be one that is of particular interest to your list members, as well as one that would give you an opportunity to segue into a marketing message. As an incentive, you may offer to give participants access to the poll/survey results.

*Free Online Surveys* at <http://www.problemfree.co.uk> allows you to create your poll or survey for free. It enables you to put a link in your e-mail that automatically opens a pop-up window that allows them to participate right there and then without being whisked away to a webpage. Free Online Surveys also gives you access to the tabulated results (which you have the option to give your respondents).

I know a professional coach who sent out an e-mail with a one-question survey. The question he asked was: "*If there were 3 things you could change about your life, what would they be?*"

He got so many responses from people who, by virtue of the 3 answers they gave in the survey, identified themselves as being candidates for coaching. This gave him an opportunity to develop a relationship with these people via e-mail, and as a result, he got more coaching clients than he thought possible.

The above is hardly an exhaustive list of ways to create communications and devices that put your audience in a receptive frame of mind to receive your marketing messages -- but I trust that it has caused a shift in your mindset when it comes to writing e-mails to your audience's frame of mind. An in-depth discussion of the use of frame-of-mind marketing™ in writing effective e-mail copy is available at <http://www.webcopywritinguniversity.com>.

### **What Really Works on the Internet Sometimes Doesn't**

There are rarely absolute truths when it comes to Internet marketing. There are only conditional truths, conditioned upon -- you guessed it! -- the frame of mind of the marketplace or your audience.

Oftentimes, what was true yesterday, last week or last year may no longer be true today. We've seen this in the case of banners and other things that have become the "next big thing," only to fall from grace later. Therefore, it makes even more sense to rely on frame-of-mind marketing™ because with it, you can mold your marketing to the expectations, predispositions, moods and environments of your audience.

In direct mail, when you track and test your mail pieces, and identify your control piece, you can roll out the control piece and virtually **predict** how much money you will make with **mathematical certainty**.

On the Internet, which is ironically enough a paradise for tracking and testing ( because of accelerated response times and the availability of sophisticated metrics), results are not as predictable. That's because things change rapidly.

I'm an advocate of tracking and testing online, but I'll be the first to warn you that my test results may or may not apply to you. Be wary of those who offer sweeping generalizations based on tests they've done independently.

If someone sent out a sales letter via e-mail and got a 20% conversion, does that mean you can duplicate what they did, and expect to get the same results? That's what the people who are selling you the idea would have you believe. But there really are too many variables to consider - the product, the list, the mode of delivery, the date the letter is sent, even the day and time the letter is sent, etc. If you have a working knowledge of statistics, you know you can't draw conclusions where there are too many variables at work.

Likewise, if someone says that Wednesday is the best day to send out e-mails to ensure maximum response, don't accept it as gospel truth. While it may be true in one entrepreneur's experience, it may not be true for you because of all the variables that comprise your respective mailings.

I've seen an offer on the Web that claims to teach you how to make your website generate \$3,500 a day with only 100 visitors a day, based on the experience of one successful website. What is the product, and what is its price point? Does \$3,500 represent gross sales or net profits? What are the traffic sources? What's the size of the list, and what are the demographics of the list? What is the quality of the web copy? The fact is, if your product, price point, traffic sources, list and web copy are different from the object of the case study, there is absolutely no way for you to duplicate the model website's results. At best, you can get **clues** that you can use in your own website. I can tell you right now -- paying attention to the frame of mind of your audience will teach you a heck of a lot more than case studies that are so far removed from the nature of your own business.

Widely accepted marketing concepts often get proliferated to the extent that they become our **consensus reality**. Be cautious about embracing them for they often get shop-worn rather quickly, and lose a lot of their punch. Frame-of-mind marketing™, on the other hand, allows you to stay 2 steps ahead of the ever-changing Internet marketplace.

There is a widely accepted concept on the Internet that advocates that you have to "date your customer" before pitching them on your product. In fact, Seth Godin, author of "Unleashing the Idea Virus" and "Permission Marketing," used the analogy of walking into a bar and proposing marriage to the first member of the opposite sex you see. But to that person, you are a stranger, and Godin says you shouldn't try to turn a stranger into a customer. Instead, you must first turn them into a prospect, and then a customer -- just like when you meet a stranger, you must first turn them into a friend, and then later turn a friend into a spouse.

While Seth Godin's concept seems undeniable, it certainly isn't true in AOL's experience. You see, AOL understands the frame of mind of its audience. AOL's users consist largely of people who are fairly new to the Internet. Because the AOL culture is the only online experience they've been exposed to, in-your-face advertising in the form of pop-up windows is something they've come to expect, and they are not even aware that such blatant promotion is deemed impolite elsewhere on the Internet. Because the marketing personnel AOL are well aware of the expectations and predispositions (i.e., frame of mind) of their users -- and they continually test the effectiveness of their pop-ups -- they **confound** the marketing experts who insist that their marketing model doesn't work.

**On the Internet, One Size Doesn't Fit All**

No one website strategy, e-mail tactic or marketing message works all the time. Something works only if harmonizes with its milieu. Ultimately, you alone can determine what will and will not work -- depending on what the frame of mind of your own audience is, and the results of your own tracking and testing.

Speaking of tracking and testing, there are e-mail marketing services that have the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of your e-mail campaigns by tracking how many of your e-mails were opened, replies, length of time opened, specific links clicked on, bounces, unsubscribes -- and even orders completed. Companies like Digital Impact, E-Mail Labs, and E-Mail Marketing Central provide these services. In my opinion, these services are invaluable not only because they show unequivocally what's working and what's not working -- but also enrich your knowledge of your audience's frame of mind in real time.

Click here to read ["So You Want a Website That Sells?"](#)

## Chapter 3: The Frame-of-Mind Marketing™ Method of Writing Website Copy That Sells

If you're like most online marketers, you probably believe that your product or service is the best in the world -- and that everyone wants and needs it. Now, stop and examine that mindset for a moment. Whose frame of mind is that? Why, yours, of course.

And who do you think cares about your frame of mind? Nobody. That's right -- people only care about **what's in it for them**.

So why is it that so many marketers write web copy on the assumption that their audience views their website with undivided attention?

Just as we must view our e-mail messages within the context of the e-mail glut that exists in our audience's In Boxes, we also must view our websites within the context of **15 million websites** and 2.5 billion pages of content vying for our viewers' attention.

### Before You Write a Single Word...

As with e-mail, you should never attempt to write a single word of website copy without first considering the frame of mind of your audience -- in this case, your web visitor.

Let's examine the frame of mind of people who are visiting your website. First, determine your website's **traffic sources** -- that is, where your web visitors are coming from.

If you're like most Internet marketers, your website traffic is coming from various sources -- search engines, links from other websites, clickthroughs from your e-mail or from newsletters that run your articles, discussion forums or chat rooms, online ads, and a host of other sources. Review your website logs, and identify where the **majority** of your traffic is coming from. Then, craft your website copy to speak to the frame of mind of the people coming from that traffic source.

Suppose you've identified that most of your web traffic is coming from search engines. Review the search engine listing that people are reading prior to clicking through to your website. This will give you an idea of what they expect to find when they arrive at your website.

Again, this might *sound* elementary but it is absolutely crucial. If your search engine listings make a claim or a promise that is not immediately fulfilled in the first screen of your website, your website visitors will click away just as fast as they came. Remember, there are many other search engine results beckoning to them and clamoring for their attention. Make sure your search engine listing "holds hands" -- that is, **integrates with** your website copy. All the components of your marketing process need to "hold hands" with each other in a **seamless relay** that holds the prospect's frame of mind every step of the way. (This will be explained in detail in the next chapter).

One of the biggest mistakes marketers make is that the components of their marketing process are **disjointed** -- that is, there's no continuity, cohesiveness and uniformity of message. All too often, they're written "in a vacuum" with no references to previous or future communications. Nothing ruins your website visitor's experience more than being whisked off to your website that in no way resembles or delivers what was promised at the previous stage of the process. This can be avoided simply by identifying your visitor's frame of mind -- what he expects to find at your website.

If a web visitor arrives at your site expecting information that is not immediately delivered upon viewing the first screen of your home page (because perhaps you might have buried the

information a few clicks deep into your website), his reaction goes beyond disappointment. Whether you realize it or not, there is an underlying feeling that you have betrayed their trust by not delivering on their expectation.

So even if your web visitor does decide to stay in your website a little longer, he'll be in an unreceptive frame of mind and he'll be subconsciously saying to himself "Why should I trust this company to deliver a product or service, when they aren't capable of respecting my time by delivering the information I need?" Do you see how indifference to your prospect's frame of mind can backfire on you -- and consequently, your sales?

After you've identified the frame of mind of your audience, based on what traffic source they're coming from, identify their other expectations and predispositions, as well as their mood and environment. Again, the best way to do this is to put yourself in the shoes of your web visitor. Write down the thoughts that run through your web visitor's head upon arrival at your website:

1) *"I wonder if I'll find the information I need at this website."*

They either clicked on a link or typed your URL into their browser because they're looking for specific information. Chances are, they're not yet predisposed to buying anything, but they're just in a fact-finding, information-gathering mode.

2) *"I hope this website is not just an advertisement. I'm looking for meaty information."*

They're hoping they get bona fide content, free of commercially-slanted information. According to the research study by John Morkes and Jakob Nielsen, Internet users **detest "marketese" or self-promoting language** steeped with *pompous, exaggerated and unsubstantiated claims* (e.g., "the world's best") that is so prevalent on the Web. They want solid content and factual information.

3) *"Should I believe the information on this site? Who wrote it?"*

They want to know the qualifications of the information provider before they believe it and read further.

All too often, marketers write website copy that ignore the above-described frame of mind. Why? Oftentimes, it's because they have pre-conceived notions on how online marketing should be done, or they insist on marketing the way they've always done (offline).

Many online businesspeople mistakenly regard the Internet as an **advertising medium** -- or one big shopping channel. As such, they create websites that are nothing but cyber-billboards that advertise their products or services.

What they don't realize is that on an average day, each one of us is bombarded with 3,500 commercial messages -- from TV, billboards, radio, the Internet and practically everywhere we turn. The last thing we want to see when we land on a website is yet another ad.

One of the biggest mistakes Internet marketers make is that they take marketing principles that work well in the offline world -- and try to force them to work on the Web.

The fact is, many principles that are effective in direct mail, print ads, radio ads, and infomercials simply do not translate well on the Web -- and in fact, they can even kill sales. Why? Because people online **generally** do not want to get "sold to." This is a proven fact documented by the study conducted by John Morkes and Jakob Nielsen. If web visitors ever do get "sold to," they first want to be finessed -- not bombarded by blatant advertising.

Therefore, writing web copy that sells requires some adroit maneuvering. You must develop irresistible content that slides smoothly into a covert "sales pitch" for your product. This is the "finessing" that net surfers are more often receptive to.

It bears repeating that your "sales pitch" shouldn't sound like an ad, but rather read like an editorial, testimonial, advice, case study, or endorsement. In the brick-and-mortar (i.e., offline) world, the closest kin of this kind of writing are the advertorial and the press release.

This style gives your website an aura of **credibility** -- often referred to as the "halo effect."

When you wrap your advertising message within the soft cushions of a good editorial piece, you position yourself as an **expert**. What's more, you get to be the good guy who gives valuable information, not the slick "hype-ster" who's out to pry dollars out of people's wallets.

This kind of **cyber-journalism** -- sometimes referred to as **editorial marketing** -- is the **new profit-building model** for the most successful websites on the Internet.

Example: Here's what appears in the first screen of my web copywriting website:

**Web Copy That Sells -- The Secret to Creating a Profitable Website**  
by [Maria Veloso](#), Director of Web Copywriting University

*"Maria Veloso is certainly a **world-class copywriter**. When it comes to **direct-response web copy**, she is -- hands-down -- the **best**. She wrote the web copy for my Boot Camp, and all I could say was -- Wow! Fabulous! Amazing! Sign me up!"*

-- Jay Conrad Levinson, author of the world's best-selling series of business books titled Guerrilla Marketing

**What is the biggest challenge** of online businesses?

According to a recent independent survey of more than 10,000 "net-repreneurs," the challenge is this: Their websites are not generating enough **customers** -- and consequently, there aren't enough **sales** and **profits**.

Now, let's dissect the first screen of my website, as shown above:

1) Notice that nowhere is there any inkling that this is a commercial website, nor that I'm marketing my copywriting services. The **content** in the first screen ( as well as the **format**) lends to the credibility of the website because it gives the appearance of an editorial.

If you write web copy as you would an advertisement or a sales letter, your web visitor's "radar" picks up on the commercial nature of your message, his defenses go way up. But an editorial is viewed as information -- which is what Internet users are looking for in the first place..

2) Notice that I featured a powerful testimonial given by a business celebrity, Jay Conrad Levinson. This puts a blanket of credibility on the *rest of the web copy*. Therefore, everything the web visitor reads from that point on will be positively influenced by that glowing testimonial, and will become more believable.

The testimonial also answers one of the questions that is in the mind of the web visitor, which is, *"Should I believe the information on this site? Who wrote it?"* And if there is any doubt left as to my credentials, I've made my name a clickable hyper link that opens a pop-up window featuring

my background.

3) The headline I used, which gives the appearance of an article title, immediately satisfies the first question on the web visitor's mind, which is "*I wonder if I'll find the information I need at this website.*" Presumably, the web visitor arrived at my website from my various traffic sources, all of which promise information about web copy that sells. Therefore, they arrive in a frame of mind expecting that information to be provided immediately -- and they're not disappointed.

4) The body copy starts off by immediately addressing the biggest problem of the target audience, thereby allowing the web visitor to immediately relate to the problem and putting him into a frame of mind eager to read on. This satisfies the web visitor's hope that the website is "*not just an advertisement*" because he's "*looking for meaty information.*"

Do you see how simply paying attention to the frame of mind of my audience allowed me to be **on target** with what they want and expect? **If there is a "secret" to writing web copy that sells, this is it.** And you, too, can do it just as easily in any medium by following the steps I've described above.

Once you've developed the irresistible content, you then slide smoothly into a covert "sales pitch" for your product or service, making sure you're paying attention to your audience's frame of mind **every step of the way**. This is key.

As the web copy progresses (whether on the same webpage, or in multiple webpages that drive the prospect toward the sale), your audience starts entertaining other thoughts and questions:

"What's in it for me? Is there a better product or service available elsewhere? Is it worth the price? Will this work for me if I use it? Are there any guarantees? What happens if I don't like it - - can I get my money back? How soon can I get this? Why should I buy it now? Why should I buy it from this company?"

When you answer all the questions and concerns, you drive the prospect towards making the purchase.

### **Does a Sales Letter Belong on a Website?**

One common practice among Internet entrepreneurs is taking a sales letter - - oftentimes one that has pulled well in direct mail - - and uploading it, *without changing a word*, onto a website.

You can't just slap a sales letter onto a website and expect it to sell. There are occasions when a sales letter will sell on the Web, but that's more the exception than the rule. It simply isn't the most effective way of marketing, and oftentimes, even when it does manage to pull in a few sales, the **cost per sale** would be so high that it might eat up a good chunk of the website's profits.

Let me give you a real-life example.

When I was the Director of Creative Web Writing at a major Internet marketing corporation, I had the opportunity to prove this without the shadow of a doubt. We promoted a marketing course created by **one of the most successful direct marketers** (who shall remain unnamed, but whose name is *recognizable* in all marketing circles). Instead of having me write the web copy, this famous direct marketer *\*insisted\** that we use his sales letter that had a double-digit conversion rate when it was sent via direct mail. We ran it word-for-word on a website created specifically to market the course.

Well, it **flopped** big time. It only got a small handful of sales - - less than 1/100th of 1percent conversion.

That was a very important lesson.

### **Why Can't a Sales Letter Do as Good a Job Selling Online as It Does Offline?**

It all comes down to -- you guessed it -- the frame of mind of the audience. A sales letter doesn't "harmonize" with the unique medium that the Internet is. In direct mail, a sales letter is well within its natural environment because a "letter" is the standard format for communicating by mail -- and it coincides with a mail recipient's frame of mind. A sales letter, however, is out of context on a website. It seems contrived, and its language "reeks" of unsolicited junk mail that you get in your postal mailbox everyday.

The words and the format you use on the Web need to harmonize with the Internet population's buying habits.

Direct marketers usually pay close attention to what they print on the direct mail envelope because oftentimes what's written on the envelope determines whether the envelope is opened or thrown into the trash. Those **telltale signs** like the bulk-mail indicia, the pre-printed mailing label, or the full-color overproduced mailing pieces often scream "Junk mail!" and cause the reader to either throw out the piece, or at best, read it with the kind of skepticism afforded to obviously commercial mail.

On a website, there is no envelope to tear open -- there's just the website in its full glory. I predict that before long, as the Internet population gets increasingly adept at screening the information they read, websites with sales letter salutations like "Dear Friend," "Dear Golf Enthusiast," or "Dear Fellow Entrepreneur" will immediately scream "Junk website!" -- and render a website unworthy of being read. Also, just as junk mail is regarded with skepticism, even if web visitors do get past the sales letter salutation, the rest of the web copy will fall on skeptical ears.

The above is just a small number of guidelines for writing web copy that sells -- based on frame-of-mind marketing™. An in-depth discussion of the use of frame-of-mind marketing™ in writing web copy that converts prospects into customers is available at <http://www.WebCopywritingUniversity.com>

### **Using Frame-of-Mind Marketing™ for Pay-Per-Click Promotions, Pop-Under Ads, etc.**

Frame-of-mind marketing also works effectively whenever you...

- use pay-per-click search engine promotions
- use pop-under advertising services (such as Exit Exchange and Exit Blaze)
- join programs (such as StartBlaze) that make your website appear as the opening page when people open their browsers

When you use pay-per-click search engines to drive traffic to your website, you can practically **mandate** the frame of mind of your audience since it is YOU who sets up your audience's expectations by writing your own search engine listing. Make sure you craft engaging copy for your search engine listing -- but more importantly, your website copy must **satisfy the expectations** you set up in your listing. Otherwise, you'll be paying for clicks that have no chance of converting the visitor into a customer.

Example: Suppose you have a credit repair business and you crafted your Overture search engine listing as follows:

#### **Your Credit Repaired -- 110% Money Back Guarantee**

Remove negative marks from your credit report - foreclosures, repossessions, late payments,

judgments – even bankruptcy – or we'll pay you back 110% of your fee.

[www.werepairyourcredit.com](http://www.werepairyourcredit.com) (Advertiser's Max Bid: [\\$1.14](#))

With a listing like the above, you set up your prospect's expectations -- so you had better make sure that the first screen of your website includes copy that reiterates the key promises in your listing -- and that the 110% money back guarantee is not buried 3 clicks deep into the website. The guarantee might have been the motivating factor that made your web visitor click on your listing, but he is not likely to stick around to find the guarantee if it's not in the first screen.

### Pop-Up versus Pop-Under Ads

Deciding whether to run pop-up or pop-under ads depends on the objective of your ads, and the frame of mind of the people who will view your ads.

A pop-up ad that loads on entry to a website is an "in-your-face" device that prompts your web visitors to act immediately upon entering your site. It could be very effective because of its visibility, but it can also be irritating. Most people regard pop-ups as being intrusive. Pop-ups are generally equated to **commercialism**, and people have the tendency to close the pop-up windows even before they've had a chance to load fully. AOL has had much success with pop-ups, but you will need to discern **your own audience's attitude** about pop-ups before installing them.

A background pop-up (also called a pop-under), on the other hand, is seen only after the user closes the current browser window. This is **less intrusive** than the foreground pop-up, but the disadvantage is that users may fail to see its relevance since they're viewing it **out of context**. For example: If your pop-under ad is contextually correlated to your website, but your web visitor doesn't see it until he closes his browser window (after having visited several other unrelated sites), the pop-under may seem meaningless. Again, you simply have to gauge your audience's unique frame of mind in this regard in order to make the right decision.

Pop-under ads have become the **most effective form of advertising** on the Web, according to CBS MarketWatch. Pop-under advertising networks like ExitExchange and ExitBlaze enable you to increase your website traffic as follows: Your website generates pop-unders for other network members (when visitors leave your website), and in return, you gain exposure of your webpage in other network members' exit pop-unders.

Whether you use pop-up or pop-under ads, the copy you write for them must take into consideration the **source of the eyeballs** that will be viewing your ad -- that is, where they came from immediately before seeing your ad. This will give you an idea as to your audience's frame of mind. They may have come from your own website (as in the case of your site's exit pop-up); from the website of another entrepreneur with whom you might have swapped exit traffic; or from a variety of sources.

There will be times when you couldn't possibly know where the eyeballs originated -- such as in the case of web visitors entering your website and seeing your pop-up that loads upon entry (i.e., you have no idea where they came from prior to coming to your site). Or if you're a member of a pop-under advertising network like ExitExchange, you have no idea which website was randomly assigned to display your pop-up ad upon exiting from that site.

When you know the origin of the eyeballs, it's easy to know how to craft your advertisement, opt-in offer, or any other promotion that you feature on your pop-up or pop-under ad. You simply appeal to the frame of mind of your audience prior to exposure to your ad. When you don't know the origin, you must assume that they're coming from a totally unrelated website, and your ad will need to abruptly interrupt their preoccupation. This is when stimulating the Reticular Activating System (RAS) of your prospect's brain comes to good use (see Chapter 3).

Click here to read ["So You Want a Website That Sells?"](#)

## Chapter 4: Your Marketing Process and How Frame-of-Mind Marketing™ Ties it All Together

Every encounter (or "touchpoint") you have with your prospect or customer in your marketing process carries with it a different set of circumstances, and therefore, a different frame of mind at each stage. As I've mentioned earlier, you must hold your audience's frame of mind *every step of the way*. You can't afford to "drop the ball" because every touchpoint either drives the prospect toward the sale or brings the sales process to a screeching halt.

### The Sequential Relay -- "Either Way, a Sale is Made"

The following quote, which I paraphrased from the movie, *Boiler Room*, illustrates the concept: "A sale is made in every encounter. Either you sell the customer on your idea or he sells you on his reason for not buying. Either way, a sale is made."

You must remember that the online sale doesn't revolve **exclusively** around a website. A prospect eventually finds himself at a website -- but the real selling happens even before he gets there -- and yes, even after the sale is made. Every component of the sales process -- be it a search engine listing, a free report or e-course, a newsletter article, a promotional e-mail, the website itself, the order page or the thank-you e-mail -- needs to be conceived by first considering your audience's respective frame of mind. If you've ever seen an **Olympic relay team** at work, you can understand how this works.

Here's an example of how an online sales process all ties together:

1) Your prospect, John, receives your weekly newsletter to which he subscribed for free. The subject line of your e-mail says:

SUBJECT: In case you were wondering, John...

His frame of mind: *"What's that about?"* (curious)

2) John's curiosity causes him to open your e-mail. He finds a personal, friendly -- even humorous -- note from you.

His frame of mind: *"I like this guy. He's real."*

3) John reads the article that you included in your newsletter. He finds it very informative and useful -- and wants to know more. He sees the resource box at the end of the article with a link.

His frame of mind: *"Would it be worth my time to click over to the website?"*

4) John decides to click through to the website. As the website loads, he thinks to himself, *"I wonder if I'll find what I'm looking for at this website."*

5) When your website loads, the first screen convinces him that he will find more content regarding the subject matter of your newsletter article (which is what he wanted to find).

6) John finds the editorial content you provide to be engaging and interesting. He reads on and comes upon your "hidden" sales pitch. He thinks, *"Okay, from the looks of this content, this guy's got substance. So now he's pitching me on his book. What's in it for me? Is there a better book available elsewhere? Is it worth the price? Will this work for me if I use it? Are there any guarantees? What happens if I don't like it -- can I get my money back? How soon can I get*

*this? Why should I buy it now? Why should I buy it from this company?"*

7) John is satisfied with the answers you provide in your website, so he clicks on the Order button. He reads on the order page a summary of all the things he'll get when he purchases your book, along with all the free gifts and money-back guarantee. He thinks, *"Okay, this sounds like a good deal,"* and fills out the secure order form.

Now, he's thinking, *"What now? How do I get the book now that I've paid for it?"*

8) Your Thank-You Page tells him to check his e-mail, which will give him the details of his purchase. *"I wonder how many days it will take for me to get the book?"*

9) John checks his e-mail from you, where you again thank him for the order, congratulate him on his purchase, and reinforce the sale by reiterating the benefits he'll get from the book. Then, you tell him that the book will be shipped out today, and that he should expect to receive it in 2-3 days.

Notice how every marketing touchpoint anticipated the frame of mind of John, and made sure that it answered his concerns and satisfied his expectations. Notice, too, that every touchpoint could either advance the sale or make John abandon the shopping cart altogether.

When you **map out your entire sales process** in this way, and track your results along the way via Web analysis applications (e.g., WebTrends) and e-mail campaign trackers (e.g., Digital Impact and E-Mail Labs) that are readily available online, your conversion will improve dramatically.

### **Everything You've Heard About Converting Prospects into Customers is Distorted**

Writing compelling web copy is not about having the gift of gab -- and it's not about phraseology, or using "formulas" or "magic" selling words, or even weasel words that convey half-truths. And it's definitely not about using devices to manipulate people. It's about **marketing to your audience's frame of mind**.

Frame-of-mind marketing™ is the **cornerstone** upon which all successful web copy is crafted. Whether they realize it or not, the web copywriters that convert the most prospects into customers employ it in one way or another.

The fact remains that according to some industry estimates, **95% of websites are still not making money**. (At least, not as much money as they'd like to make.) More often than not, the reason is that the single most **important ingredient** in creating a profitable website is *missing*. That ingredient is ... **web copy that sells**.

Communication guidelines written by cybergeeks and e-commerce architects are often so off-mark when it comes to online salesmanship. If you want to sell online, you must recognize the primacy of **substance** over technology.

Now that you've learned the essence of frame-of-mind™ marketing, all that's left for you to do to maximize your selling power is build on that cornerstone with concepts that work well with the unique psychology, mindset, culture and language of the Web.

Writing web copy that converts prospects into customers doesn't involve copying, cloning or borrowing the elements of successful ads from the past, and adapting them to your product. On the Internet, that's the equivalent of shooting yourself in the foot. As Joe Sugarman, legendary direct marketer, once said, *"When you copy, you fail."*

This is not to say that you shouldn't model successful people -- or websites, for that matter. It simply means that when you **indiscriminately** copy the writing styles from another medium, another genre, or another era, you really aren't harmonizing with the unique medium that is the Internet.

I believe that success leaves clues, but you have to model the process through which the success was attained, NOT the outcome of that process. That is to say, examine the steps and the factors that were considered in writing the web copy, instead of modeling the web copy itself and trying to adapt it where it isn't appropriate. That's like putting a square peg into a round hole. **Modeling the process** involves being aware of the frame of mind of your audience at every step of the sales process.

If I can leave you with just one more piece of advice, it is this: Do not model the styles of offline copywriters -- not even the most prominent ones. Just because someone is a great copywriter for the offline markets doesn't mean his writing skills can translate into effective Web writing. Even some of the best copywriters for the offline markets are not necessarily **adept** at writing effective copy for the Web.

The traditional experts of good copy writing have been slow to adapt to the special requirements of electronic text -- and the culture, mindset, psychology, and "language" of the Web.

For instance...

DID YOU KNOW... that the 12 most persuasive words in the English language (according to a Yale University study) -- words that direct marketers use liberally in offline marketing materials -- are **counterproductive** to sales when used in e-mail? (*With the exception of 2 words.*)

DID YOU KNOW... that even if you know the 26 human needs that cause people to buy, if you don't know which of those needs is **most real** to your prospect at the moment of your encounter with him, that a sale is not likely to happen?

Why do some online businesses achieve **double-digit sales conversion rates** so easily on the Web, while others try everything possible and barely make any sales at all?

The startling answers to these and other mysteries of successful online selling are revealed in my article, ["So You Want a Website That Sells?"](#)

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Maria Veloso is widely acknowledged as the leading expert in web copywriting. She is the author of *Web Copy That Sells: The Secret to Creating a Profitable Website*, and the Director of Web Copywriting University, which specializes in teaching Internet entrepreneurs and writers how to write web copy that converts 15%, 25% -- even 50% of web visitors into customers. The University's landmark *Web Copywriting Mastery Course*, which delivers surefire web copywriting strategies that have been scientifically proven to dramatically boost website sales, is now **available in audiocassette**. Click here for details <http://www.WebCopywritingUniversity.com>

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