

The Business of Brochures

They are all around us. In display racks at stores, in the mail, in waiting rooms, at fast food restaurants, in hotel lobbies, and car dealerships ...the ubiquitous brochure.

How many brochures are out there? Consider the brochures put out by one company - Avon. According to their website, in 2001, more Avon sales brochures were produced annually than U.S. \$100 bills printed by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. Multiply that by the number of businesses worldwide and you have a staggering number.

But what makes a brochure accomplish its goal? What separates a good brochure from a not so good brochure?

First and foremost as copywriter guru Bob Bly points out in his book, "The Copywriter's Handbook," is to "know where the brochure fits into the buying process." Will the brochure be used by salespeople as a leave behind to potential buyers? Will the brochure be in a rack in a hotel lobby vying for the attention of guests? Will it be in a display case in a new car dealer's showroom describing the features of benefits of the new model? Perhaps the brochure is mailed out to potential customers in response to an inquiry from another source.

Some of the most ineffective brochures are those which become the printed equivalent of a radio commercial for a new car. You know the ones. The commercials where the announcer races breathlessly

through all the annual APR rates, taxes and other charges associated with buying a new car.

A brochure needs to “breathe,” and address itself to the interest of the consumer at that particular juncture in the selling process.

While staying in a hotel in Florida recently I came across a brochure which cleverly caught my attention. The brochure was for Wannado City, and tied in neatly with a King Tut exhibit at the Museum of Art in Fort Lauderdale. One side of the brochure was printed information about the King Tut exhibit. On the reverse side of the brochure was a caption, “Be the Boy King at Wannado City”. The next sentence read, “After seeing the boy king, come to America’s first indoor role playing theme park for kids.” At the bottom of the brochure, instead of listing complicated driving directions, the text read simply, “Located at Sawgrass Mills,” and then simply the web address of (www.WannadoCity.com). Nice and succinct. The brochure, especially where kids are involved, could have listed all the activities available, admission fees, places to eat, directions and parking instructions. But to its credit it didn’t. The owners clearly knew where the brochure fit in their selling process and used it as a lure to the website where more specific information could be obtained.

There are many other techniques for preparing an effective brochure, but first and foremost, knowing where the brochure is going

to be used in the selling process is an important first step. Follow this rule, and you are well on your way to creating a powerful marketing tool for your business.