



How a Guarantee Builds Direct Mail Profits

By Hugh Chewing

When it comes to decision making, I have a simple approach. If I believe the outcome might be something I wouldn't want my mother to know about, I don't do it. And when creating a direct mail offer a similar rule applies. If you can't provide a meaningful guarantee, don't promote it.



You have two reasons to offer a guarantee:

First, it's the right thing to do. A meaningful guarantee shows that you believe in your product. And, when you're asking for someone else's money, you should believe in what you're selling—if not, don't do it.

Second, you'll want to offer a guarantee because it can build profits.

Buyers, whether online or traditional direct mail, have plenty of reasons—real or perceived—not to respond to your offer. After all, whether we're fundraising or selling a product, we're asking the prospect to trust us to do what we promised. And unless we can overcome the prospect's uncertainty, we're going to lose the sale.

A strong guarantee shows that you believe in your offer. It's your written assurance that you accept responsibility for the quality of your product or service. It's the promise of a good customer experience; it helps remove the hesitation

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www.cdmdirect.com

Phone: 949-854-5401 • E-mail: HChewing@CDMdirect.com

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that might otherwise jeopardize the sale.

How to write a guarantee

Every organization or business—including nonprofits—can offer a guarantee. Explain in clear, easy-to-understand language:

- What product or service is being promised
- How this product or service benefits the buyer
- Any terms, conditions or limitations—whether the product must be registered, if it is a 90- or 120-day guarantee, whether you will repair the product or replace it, if you are offering a full refund or a prorated amount, etc.
- What the customer needs to do to activate the guarantee—call a toll-free number, go to a Web site or return to the store
- And what the buyer can expect from you if they have a problem

Tell the customer everything they need to know but keep the guarantee short and to the point. Run it past the legal department before it goes to print, but do not include legalese in the guarantee. If there's legal language that you must include, work it into the letter copy on page two or three—and absolutely no asterisks. Asterisks reek of insincerity.

Call attention to your guarantee

Position the guarantee where it will be seen. Put it in the letter near the closing—close to the call to action—and mention it in the postscript. Also, add the guarantee to the response form and any brochure or freestanding insert. Even consider a separate “Guarantee Certificate” enclosure.

Put a certificate-style border around the guarantee to make it stand out. In the letter copy, introduce the guarantee with a sub-headline and double indent the text to catch the reader's eye.

Put the guarantee on your Web site, the product's landing page, the checkout page, and on any collateral material. Show people that you're proud of your product and proud of how you take care of your customers.

Make your guarantee stronger

The stronger the guarantee, the fewer reasons the prospect has to hesitate or feel uncertain before responding.

If you're offering a “Money-Back Guarantee,” there's no extra cost to offer a “100% Money-Back, No-Risk Guarantee.” Also, consider a “Double Your Money

Back Guarantee.” And if you offer a “1-Year Guarantee,” consider a “3-Year Guarantee.”

A good guarantee makes it easier for the prospect to buy your product. And, as long as it’s believable, the stronger the guarantee the better.

Make it easy

Make it easy for the customer to use the guarantee. Let the customer know that if they are unhappy with the product, they should just return it and you’ll promptly refund its full cost. No questions asked.

If the customer must return a product, include free shipping—both ways. Maybe even throw in a small gift or handwritten note in apology.

The true value of a better guarantee

Without doubt, some people will take advantage of your guarantee and try to rip you off for a few extra dollars. But the vast majority of people are honest, and offering a stronger guarantee can not only reduce buyer reluctance and increase sales, it can also help build customer loyalty.

People want to believe they’re getting the best product for their money. And they want to know they’re dealing with a company that values their business.

A strong guarantee is your promise to give the customer a positive experience. It tells the customer that there’s no need to try another company—even if the price is a few dollars lower—because you’re going to take care of them.

Even if they never need to take advantage of it, your guarantee gives the customer the confidence to make the buying decision and want to continue doing business with you.

Our customers are our most valued asset. And however much it costs to honor your guarantee, it will be much less than the cost of replacing an unsatisfied customer.

I guarantee it.

About the author:

Hugh Chewning is a direct marketing copywriter, strategist and consultant who helps consumer, nonprofit and business-to-business organizations acquire, retain and cross-sell customers. Located in Irvine, California, Hugh provides tested and proven tips on how to boost your campaign’s profitability in his free blog, [Direct Mail Insight](#). And for information on his free, no-risk package critique, visit his web site at www.cdmdirect.com.