

Sales Letter Formulas

Why Use A Formula?

A formula is a general guideline – not a ‘paint-by-numbers’ process to an instant sales letter. It’s a roadmap designed to help you get to your desired destination in the most direct way possible. Formulas are established methods or formats that have worked for others to produce results.

Essentially, a formula is a way of organizing and presenting your material in a way that generates sales. Successful formulas are founded upon an understanding of human behavior. It’s not merely a matter of extolling all the virtues of your product – it’s about adapting a strategy that attracts an audience, addressing already existing ‘wants’, and then serving up an appealing offer that’s crafted in a way to push the emotional hot buttons of targeted prospects.

Sound sales letter formulas work well both in the online and offline markets. It’s a planned presentation, the same kind of sales pitch an effective salesperson would use to persuade interested prospects.

The A.I.D.A. Method For Writing Effective Ads

- Attention
- Interest
- Desire
- Action

Grab your prospect’s ATTENTION. Expand his INTEREST. Build the DESIRE to a feverish pitch, and move your prospect along towards taking ACTION. Essentially, the AIDA Formula is about converting a passing interest into an intense desire for ownership to the point where action is taken immediately.

1. **Attention** – Every sales letter must command an audience – first and foremost. You simply have to catch surfers/readers/prospects INSTANTLY as they land at your site.

The attention-getting task is primarily left to your headline. You’ve got to hit their sweet spot – quickly and definitively -- with a headline that catches their attention and grabs their interest. The best headlines draw the eye and generate excitement. They mesmerize and captivate prospects, compelling them to read on.

2. **Interest** – You can't begin to build serious interest if you don't first have your prospect's undivided attention. With the prospect's attention, it's crucial that you fuel his interest. Intensify his interest and curiosity. Clearly the best way to do this is to pile on the benefits. Give him benefits of value and significance. Make it clear how your product will enhance his life in some way. Tailor your benefits to the audience.
3. **Desire** -- Continually build prospect interest to the point where that interest gets converted into desire. Desires drive people – it's a force that comes from within. Once your prospect's interest becomes a desire to won, the sale is almost a sure thing. Make them an offer they can't refuse. Add irresistibility by providing far more value in terms of products, than you ask in price. Pile on helpful and in-demand bonus items, a strong guarantee and limit your offer.

Converting interest into desire is all about salesmanship. You want to make your offer sound so advantageous... so easy... so affordable... and the perfect solution to your prospect's problem.

4. **Action** -- This is where you either close the sale or lose the prospect. You want positive action NOW. That's the target and that's the mindset you must adopt if you want to make your sales letter a direct-response tool. Close your letter by asking for action. It's an important final step in the process... but one that many seem to miss.

It's not enough to grab the attention of target prospects, stack multiple benefits sky-high, and generate a burning desire with a superb offer and guarantee – you also need to lead to buy. Make it easy to buy with multiple payment and ordering options. Make the action phase a logical and reasonable conclusion to your benefit-laden presentation.

That's it... short and sweet. Easy to learn and recall at will. The AIDA formula can be tremendously effective on it's own. You can also take its basic framework and adapt it into your own formula, method, or system.

The AIDA formula is the best known and probably the oldest advertising formula ever developed. This one is clearly time-tested and proven effective beyond any shadow of a doubt. With just 4 basic elements, it's also very easy to remember.

AIDA provides a solid foundation for any type of advertising – including sales letters. If you used nothing but the AIDA method, you could, with a little practice develop powerful, persuasive sales letters.

Alternate Sales Letter Formulas By Noted Copywriters

Victor Schwab

- Get Attention
- Show People An Advantage
- Prove It
- Persuade People To Grasp This Advantage
- Ask For Action

Robert Collier

- Attention
- Interest
- Description
- Persuasion
- Proof
- Close

Bob Stone

1. Promise your most important BENEFIT in the headline
2. Immediately ENLARGE your most important BENEFIT
3. Tell the reader specifically what he's going to get (WIIFM)
4. Back up your statement with PROOF and ENDORSEMENTS
5. WARN the reader what might be lost if he doesn't act
6. Rephrase your prominent BENEFITS in your closing
7. Incite action – NOW

Jay Abraham

- Telegraph your message only to PRIME PROSPECTS
- Attract the attention of your target audience in the headline or opening remarks
- State your proposition or offer
- Use the rest of the ad to DEVELOP, SUPPORT, and PRESENT YOUR OFFER and the REASONS WHY the prospect should embrace it
- Tell your prospect how to take ACTION

Henry Hoke

- Picture
- Promise
- Prove
- Push

Frank Dignan

- **Star** -- An opening that quickly captures the readers imagination
- **Chain** – A series of facts to change the reader’s casual attention to a real and sustained interest
- **Hook** – Something to impel the desired action

Gary Halbert

1. Write a fact sheet about your product’s FEATURES
2. Create a BENEFIT list – then prioritize it in order of importance to the prospect
3. Write out your OFFER
4. Craft a HEADLINE that reveals NEWS or the biggest or multiple BENEFITS
5. If more than 2 big benefits – use a sub-heading
6. Reveal who’s writing the letter
7. Insert a salutation – “dear (target subject)” or “Dear Friend”
8. Use the first sentence to reveal what’s in it for the prospect if he reads your letter
9. Elaborate specifically on promises
10. Tell why you’re offering such a great deal
11. Enumerate facts that translate into benefits and list them – 1, 2, 3, 4.
12. Include all believable reasons why you’re selling this product
13. Ask for response and urge hurrying
14. Sign off with “sincerely,”
15. Write a P.S. that gives the prospect a new little wrinkle on one of the hot reasons you’ve already given him as to why he should buy your product NOW

Earl Buckley

- Interest
- Desire
- Conviction
- Action

Here's my own simple adaptation of the AIDA Formula – the “AHA” Formula

- Attract ATTENTION and interest immediately
- HOLD attention and interest while continuously increasing the intensity
- Present an irresistible offer and guide the prospect to ACTION

The 2 Most Important Steps Of Any Formula

Inevitably, you must first capture the ATTENTION of your prospect before you can even hope to impact him with your sales message. It all starts with winning an attentive and receptive ear.

But the ultimate objective is to not merely gain a reader of your letter -- it's to win action. You want your prospect to buy NOW. So every effective sales letter should conclude with a push for ACTION.

You grab the prospects attention with your headline and the first frame of your sales page. Action is obtained by advancing prospects through the letter from A – Z and on towards the order page. That's where prospects must land in order to buy. Between your headline and order form lies the bulk of your sales letter.

ATTENTION ----- ACTION

There are several ways to nudge prospects from the attention phase into action. It's about converting the mildly interested prospect into an eager-to-buy new customer. To do so, you must maintain their interest and build it into a desire for whatever it is you're offering.

Make prospects feel that your product isn't just something they should get – but something they simply *must* own. Elevate their interest and desire to a level where prospects are convinced that taking action to acquire the product is the only sensible thing to do.

In essence, we're back to the AIDA formula again. Get attention. Arouse the prospect's interest in your proposition. Stimulate a desire to experience the perceived benefits. And finally, ask the prospect to take action by placing an order now.

It's crucial that you target your audience, base your message on benefits, and include an outstanding offer.

Additional Elements Of Power and Persuasion

Between ATTENTION and ACTION, you can employ various tools, techniques, and strategies – all culminating in a call for action.

Here are several proven effective elements to include somewhere between the attention-getting and action phases...

Proof – You need to add believability and credibility to your sales message. Proof adds realism and value, while strengthening your benefit-packed message. Show proof and your message gains much more interest and respect. Proof eliminates the ‘fluff factor’. Testimonials, endorsements, and success stories offer credible proof that your advertising claims are true.

Tell A Success Story – Everybody loves a great story. Make it exciting, dramatic -- even shocking. A true story of how your product evolved, or how it helped one buyer change his life makes for intriguing copy.

Urgency – Experienced copywriters know that their moment of truth is NOW. If they don’t win action while the prospect’s mind is still filled with glorious images of life after a purchase, there’s less chance of winning the sale at all. Everyone needs a push –some more than others. Add an element of scarcity to your offer .Let prospects know it won’t last and that by failing to respond immediately, they’ll lose out on this rare opportunity.

Damaging Admission – Admit a flaw and you gain respect. Everybody knows perfection doesn’t exist. If you look closely enough, every product has some flaw – major or minor. But most marketers only address the positives. In fact, they overdo it. What happens is their message is perceived as sales hype and looked upon with heightened suspicion. When you admit to a shortcoming, you are in essence leveling with your prospect, as you would a friend.

Reasons Why – An exceptional offer needs some kind of explanation. Tell prospects why you’re sweetening the deal and how they benefit from it. Providing a reason helps justify the deal without cheapening the product.

Reward For Reading – Establish value at the outset. Make it worth your prospect’s time to read your letter and let him know why it’s important to do so.

Consequences Of Inaction – A sobering reminder of all the prospect will lose out on by not responding can help sway them into action.

Establish Value – Give them much more in perceived benefits than you ask for in price. Add bulk to your offer with bonus items. Add security with a guarantee.

Supporting Facts – Reveal the key product features that make specific benefits possible. Facts (features) give your interpretations (benefits) solid legs to stand on. They justify the benefits and make your claims more believable.

Create An “After” – Establish a vivid image of life for your prospect after a purchase. Make it clearly advantageous – a stark contrast from where they are now. Place your prospect inside this image and allow him to feel what it’s like to have what he wants. Let him fully grasp the advantages of owning your product.