

mei-ster:
Suffix denoting
a professional
practitioner

ProfitMeister

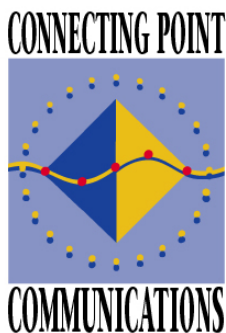
MAXIMIZING YOUR MARKETING MONEY

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“You give fresh new approaches, enthusiasm, and a reminder of forgotten practices.”

Jill Duval
Publisher

New Mexico Woman, inc



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Letters—A Forgotten Sales Tool

Hurrying off to the next prospect? Don't leave money on the table by failing to close the loop with a letter

Similar products, equally competent salespeople and two strong companies could make for a difficult decision. Joe had received a letter from Wicked Widgets after each meeting. He'd received nothing from Wonder Widgets. He reached for the phone.

Good business means writing. The business letter cements and communicates thoughts, clarifies and reinforces a discussion, recaps a meeting and keeps you in touch with your customer. A good letter grabs attention and focuses the mind of the customer on you. It sets up an opportunity for your return.

Short letter format

How do you write a business letter? The Short Letter Format offers an outline for nearly any situation. Three paragraphs and not many more sentences make this letter quick and easy to write.

Paragraph one – thanks for the meeting. Make a summary statement about your business.

Thanks for the opportunity to meet with you and Paul yesterday. Your marketing plans sound well thought out; we can certainly assist you with particulars like case studies and direct mail copy.

Paragraph two – restate the opportunity. Make a comment about the prospect's store, market, or opportunity; follow that with a statement about how your product can help meet the opportunity.

You offer a great array of services. We discussed capturing some of your most compelling success stories to generate sales collateral, web copy and brochure materials; our company specializes in visibility through persuasive copy-writing.

Paragraph Three – call to action. Close explicitly. Rather than “let's get together soon,” say “Let's meet early next week to discuss the potential effort. I'll call Monday morning for an appointment.”

Thanks for referring me to Stephanie in your marketing department. I'll follow up with her to get the information for our sample copy; we will present that to you at our meeting scheduled for 10:00 am Friday of next week.

Housekeeping for letters

Short and simple works. Good writing has varied sentence length; eight words might be a short target. Use active verbs to get your point across. Think of the business letter as an efficient communication tool.

The three most common letter writing problems include spelling errors, punctuation misuse and unsigned letters. The fear of any one of these can intimidate a business owner into not writing.

Spelling errors destroy your image and credibility. Above all, correctly spell the name of your client or prospect and his/her business. People assume that if you overlook

“Regarding” lines give you additional focus and highlight your letter for the client.

small details, you’ll be careless with the larger ones as well.

Creativity with punctuation causes additional problems. Many writers feel that sentences must end with an exclamation point for emphasis. Instead be emphatic with the words you use. Use commas sparingly.

Above all, check your letter for a signature. Unsigned letters sent in haste devalue your service.

Form letters

You can use the computer to send form letters. Certain phrases may characterize your style. Add to those phrases personalized comments pertinent to the client and project at hand. The customization of a letter prevents it from being an ineffective document.

Secret success tip

When you format your letters, use a “regarding” line between the return address and the salutation. A multi-millionaire emphasized two dramatic reasons for the regarding line: 1. A regarding line gives additional focus for your thinking; 2. It highlights your letter for the client.

Regarding lines, like good headlines, lead the prospect directly into content. Sample regarding lines include: RE: Your business depends upon good communication; RE: Thanks for talking with me about more visibility for your company.

Appropriate handwritten notes

Deborah read the newspaper before leaving for the office. When she noticed a colleague mentioned in an article, she clipped it, jotted a congratulatory note and placed the envelope by

her briefcase. She would mail it on the way to work.

Handwritten notes go with social occasions such as luncheons or entertainment meetings. The client who gives you a lead, helps you with a problem or does you a favor deserves a handwritten note.

Jot a handwritten note to a client with a copy of an article about his industry, his store or his pet charity project; use such a note to compliment a client on a speech or a personal triumph.

Conclusion

Writing a letter is a personal act. It can cement a relationship. Communicate your interest in writing.

Your letter markets for you when you’re not there. It enables the client to pass your logic on to someone else in the company. Your correspondence may reach someone that you don’t see regularly.

In the radio industry, for example, letters provide strong selling tools. A merchandising letter recaps promotional efforts for the client. It outlines what went well and notes items that could be improved next time. Copies sent to those not present for the event ensure that everyone involved works with the same information. Frequently, the merchandising letter saves time in the long run. It builds trust and eliminates misunderstandings. It serves as the marker of the true professional.

Plan to incorporate more letters into your business; you’ll discover ongoing solid benefits as a result.

To learn more

Each month ProfitMeister discusses one aspect of marketing that can increase your profits. If you have a topic to suggest, email: me@myconnectingpoint.com. Visit my blog at www.ProfitMeister.com.



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