



# Why You Should Test: 4 Surprising Test Results to Help You Market Better

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# **Why You Should Test: 4 Surprising Test Results to Help You Market Better**

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Your ad isn't aimed at everybody who sees it—just the prospects for your product.

75% of the success or failure of your digital ads, direct mail piece, landing page, video script is the headline.

Use your headline and illustration to grab your prospects' attention and induce them to read the copy or watch the video/commercial.

Your headline must contain a benefit and be simple, clear and direct. Readers travel fast through that jungle. They don't stop to decipher the meanings of obscure headlines.

Over the years I've tested thousands of headlines. Often, it's counter intuitive. What you think will work, won't. and what you think won't, does.

That's why we test.

When a reader sees your ad, two questions go through their mind: "What's the deal?" and "What's in it for me?" You must answer those questions fast.

That's being direct, not obscure or cute. If your ad is not direct, the reader just won't take the time to figure out your message.

Advertisements with direct-benefit headlines are four-times more effective than ads with indirect headlines.

As Fairfax Cone said, "Good advertising must immediately make clear what the basic proposition is."

Insurance direct marketers follow this advice with headlines like: "Big Insurance Savings for Nonsmokers" and "The First Hospital Income Plan Specifically Designed for Older People."

Those headlines identified the products and their benefits.

The proof is in the Test!

Here are headlines that were tested against each other for advertising a home air conditioning unit:

1. A) "Don't Swelter this Summer"
- B) "Now Every Home Can Afford Summer Cooling."

The second headline pulled 300% more inquiries than the first.

Another headline test was conducted for a chocolate pudding ad.

1. A) "How to Make this Chocolate Pudding in 6 Minutes."
- B) "Tonight Serve This Ready-Mixed Chocolate Pudding. Six Minutes to Prepare."

The second one proved 66% better than the first.

See if you can pick which of these two headlines pulled the best:

1. A) "A Guaranteed Vacation for Life"  
B) "A Guaranteed Paycheck for the Rest of Your Life."

Would you believe the "Guaranteed Paycheck" headline pulled 300% more responses than the other?

A life insurance company selling annuities used these two headlines:

1. A) "Leave Money for Your Family After You're Gone"  
B) "Get Rid of Money Worries for Good."

The second headline pulled five-times as many coupons as the first. So, if you were to spend \$100,000 on the ad with the better headline, you would get the same results as if you spent \$500,000 on the inferior ad. (Clearly, testing is NOT too expensive.)

Here are some recent headlines I've completed for clients for direct mail:

Believe it or not, long headlines are more effective than short ones. Why? They're more specific and promise more benefits.

Can you get by with shorter copy?

Consider this: An ad should make your sales story interesting, clear, believable, persuasive, specific and complete enough to make the reader want to buy your product. This can't be done with short copy.

Like a good salesman, your ad must anticipate objections and answer them. Any unanswered questions can lead to doubt and indecision—and that can mean the loss of the sale.

Just remember—if your headline promises the reader something that interests him, he'll read your ad. If the copy is long, it's just more information on a subject he wants to know more about. That's the way advertising should be approached.

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