

Why Use Uncertainty in Your Sales Copy



Why would you want to introduce uncertainty in your sales message? It doesn't make sense. Isn't the idea of sales copy to instill a level of confidence and certainty so potential buyers are motivated to purchase?

We want to believe we are motivating buyers to purchase. Veteran copywriters will tell you it's more about the persuasion to purchase. There are some who object to using persuasion techniques. It's their belief a purchase decision is being manipulated rather than reached by logic and reasoning.

Think of persuasion as influencing a change in beliefs with some form of information and motivation as the possibility of acting on that persuasive information.

One of the early challenges online marketers face is being viewed as a credible "expert." They may even consider themselves a fraud. Subsequently, their view of their

potential success is limited. However, seasoned marketers and coaches will assure them, they can build their expertise as they build their business.

The Certainty of the Expert

Our general belief is that we want to buy from “experts” because they offer compelling information – facts, figures, features, benefits, and experience. This gives them a quality of “certainty” which helps to address our doubts and increases our sense of trust.

In terms of [persuasion research](#), we are more likely to be motivated to purchase, because we have been persuaded by a source that has a persuasive certainty and conveys trust. (Remember this is a behavior generality and does not apply to everyone and all circumstances.)

One way to overcome the objection of not being an expert is to promote your product or service by referencing the work and words of someone who is a recognized expert. It’s also a subtle way of increasing your trust factor.

The Certainty of the Non-Expert

Dispelling the myth of certainty by experts, persuasion research by a [Harvard Business School marketing professor, Uma Karmarkar](#), indicates non-experts can also be credible convincers. However, they need to express a high degree of

certainty to motivate positive outcome.

This is why when you add testimonials to your copy they are so effective.

A person providing a testimonial is a non-expert because they are not rating or comparing your product or service from the viewpoint of expertise. Instead, they are providing a value judgment based on personal experience. Their level of satisfaction is supporting a level of certainty and also enhancing your trust factor.

The Flip-Flop from Certainty to Uncertainty

When an expert changes an opinion or endorsement, two possibilities occur. First, there is a natural drop in certainty, credibility, and trust. In the mind of a buyer, you've just introduced a level of unexpected uncertainty.

When you put it in a brain perspective, the brain wants to respond as quickly and effectively as possible based on previously stored patterns of certainty information. When it suddenly encounters uncertainty, it has to reconfigure what was previously acceptable. This creates an increased level of distrust (a psychological ploy well used in political strategies).

Consider, how you feel when a fellow marketer promotes an affiliate program which you purchase based on their

recommendation (level of certainty). You invest your time in learning the new program and you're up and running.

Then, several months later, they are promoting a similar affiliate program from someone else that is touted to be better. Do you feel betrayed? Where is your level of certainty and trust for this marketer? The level of uncertainty for this marketer, and maybe others as well, increases and any future purchases are viewed with skepticism.

The second possibility is the brain's sense of curiosity. To have a question of "why" go unanswered keeps the internal gears spinning until it can find an answer. So, when a marketer suddenly switches allegiance or promoting something completely different, the spectrum of curiosity is raised.

Both possibilities give a marketer a chance to offer an explanation and credible reasons for moving from one position to another. If a buyer senses their best interests are not being protected or their curiosity satisfied, uncertainty then becomes a greater obstacle to overcome.

How to Use Uncertainty to Your Advantage

It would seem obvious that one way to address uncertainty is to provide more information, include more testimonials, and learn the art of the long sales page.

But, the best counterintuitive approach is to include

uncertainty. Uncertainty does something more effectively than certainty. It engages the brain with curiosity. It gets attention and engages thinking before acting.

Whereas with certainty, we suppose a buyer is more inclined to act. What we forget is their experience is also predictable. They've already been exposed to the compelling vocabulary and reasons from other marketers. And, they already know the formula leading them through the buying process.

To a certain extent buyers may act to get a product or service, but then not follow through or fail to get all the benefits of an offer. They're not dissatisfied buyers, but rather buyers who cannot vouch for the success of your product or service.

Where uncertainty is valuable is getting a potential buyer out of acting mode and into thinking mode on the value of engaging with you.

Buyers will naturally approach an offer with some level of cautiousness, skepticism, and uncertainty until convinced this is right for them. What we naturally do as marketers is to overcome a buyer's uncertainty rather than placing uncertainty on us.

When you the marketer is uncertain, you create an interruptive reaction in the buyer's mind.

"What do you mean I might not qualify or have access

to your program?”

Now you've got their attention and they start thinking differently about you and your offer.

Uncertainty That Can Work to Your Advantage

Restricting Access

- Request they submit an application to determine if they qualify for your program or level of training.
- Ask to complete a questionnaire for meeting the criteria of the clients your work with.
- Give them a survey to complete to determine if they have the abilities, skills, or level of commitment.
- Limit signing up for this program only to those who have already completed your free, basic program. Then, you can provide a link to access the free training and notify them you are placing their name on the wait list for the next scheduled offer.

Be Upfront with Uncertainty in Your Sales Copy

- “This might not be for you but I thought I'd give you a chance to ...”
- “I'm not sure you're ready to move to the next level of success training, but if you think you might be ...”
- “I understand you're not ready to commit now to your success, but I would like to offer you this ...”
- “Why you shouldn't buy my training, until you ...”
- “I'd love to work with you but I only work with those who are ...”

Do you see the advantage of including an element of

uncertainty here?

You've switched roles. No longer is the buyer holding the total decision power to buy. It's been replaced with your uncertainty. They now are curious and want to engage with you as to why you are uncertain about them.

It can also increase the likelihood of a purchase and the need to prove you wrong. They want to show you that your product or service does work for them. It also means that it is incumbent upon you to provide everything you promised to sustain their trust is getting the most out of what you've offered.

While this may or may not work for your business, it's another option to get potential buyers to engage and think more about you and your offer.

The question of the day: Can you think of a way of introducing some level of uncertainty into your sales copy?

https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-upside-of-uncertainty/?WT.mc_id=SA_DD_20161108

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