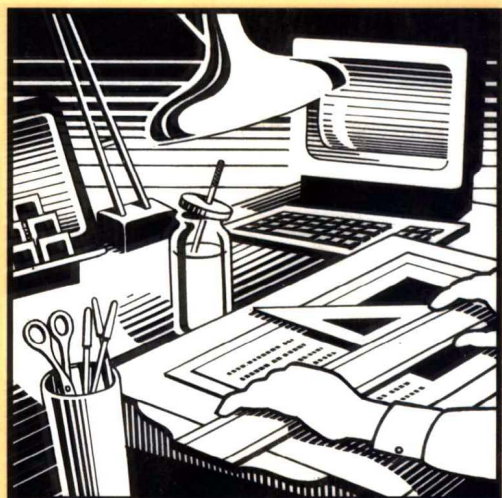




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THE PERFECT SALES PIECE



***A Complete
Do-It-Yourself
Guide to
Creating Brochures,
Catalogs, Fliers,
and Pamphlets***

ROBERT W. BLY

THE PERFECT SALES PIECE

A Complete Do-It-Yourself Guide to
Creating Brochures, Catalogs, Fliers, and
Pamphlets

Robert W. Bly

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PREFACE

Just about every company in business today needs some type of printed literature to establish credibility and provide information on its products or services. And because it's your job (or part of your job) to create this material, you bought this book.

The Perfect Sales Piece provides step-by-step instructions for every phase of the job—from evaluating what type of sales literature you need, to planning and outlining your brochure, writing and design, finding illustrations and photographs, creating mechanicals, and printing.

The Perfect Sales Piece tells you how to create printed literature that fits your product, your company, your image, and your budget. It can guide you in producing anything from a \$100,000, 32-page corporate capabilities brochure to a \$10 offset flier that will be posted on the local community bulletin board.

Here's how the book is organized:

Chapter 1 sets the stage. It discusses why companies need sales literature, including its benefits and applications, and it describes the 11 basic categories of sales literature.

Chapters 2–4 show you how to set a production schedule and budget for the project and how to decide what information to include in the brochure. You'll also learn where to find and how to work with professional copywriters, photographers, illustrators, graphic artists, desktop publishing services, and printers.

Chapters 5–9 take you through the process of designing, writing, illustrating, and printing your brochure. We also take a look at a number of special problems that may come up in the creation of promotional literature and how to solve them.

Chapter 10 is a guide to managing a *program* of successful promotional literature. It is for the person who plans to produce a whole series of brochures, not just one. You'll also learn how to gauge the success of your literature program.

2 Preface

The book is illustrated with numerous annual reports, product brochures, fliers, booklets, circulars, catalogs, bulletins, newsletters, and mailers. These samples are included to show you what works in design and layout—and what doesn't.

If you have produced a brochure or promo piece you are particularly proud of, why not send it to me so I can share it with readers of the next edition of this book? You will receive full credit, of course. Write to:

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CHAPTER ONE

SO YOU THINK YOU NEED PRINTED LITERATURE!

A stockbroker phones a prospect to explain a new investment opportunity. The prospect is mildly interested but isn't ready to take the plunge. "Send me some literature on the fund," says the would-be investor, "and I'll give you a call when I'm ready to spend."

An executive secretary walks into her local delicatessen. "I want you to cater our company's sales meeting next month," she explains to the counter-man. "Do you have a catering menu I can take with me to show my boss?"

A management consultant visits a major insurance company and is asked for his client list, schedule of fees, and business card.

We live in a world of documentation, of paper, of establishing credibility. A friendly smile and a handshake aren't enough. We like to feel that we are dealing with people who are established in business, in the same way we prefer a brand name over brand X.

Of course, no amount of fancy brochures, business cards, streamlined logos, or colorful catalogs can guarantee that a job will be done well or that a product won't stop working five minutes after it has been purchased. Still, promotional literature does go a long way toward setting a professional business tone, one that adds a sense of credibility and stability to a business enterprise.

It isn't surprising to find that some of the best-established businesses have the most uniform and attractive sales literature. A certain sureness of tone and style comes with practice.

For example, one of the finest old inns in the United States, the Publick House in Sturbridge, Massachusetts, has a folder in each guest room containing no fewer than 12 brochures—each dealing with a service or element of the inn's features. The brochures contain the Publick House logo, and each is characterized by a similarity of tone and a warm-spirited, low-key approach.

The Publick House has been in business for 200 years. Not every business has had the opportunity to hone its image for that period of time. Yet

almost every business requires some form of sales literature to keep products and services in the customer's mind, to distinguish itself from the competition, and to answer a prospective buyer's questions.

A Brochure Can Do Many Things

Most organizations discover the need for printed literature as they conduct their daily business. Frequent requests for brochures force the seller to produce a booklet or flier to satisfy the customers' thirst for information.

But a brochure can do more than fill space in a customer's shopping bag or desk drawer. When executed and used correctly, your brochure can become a powerful tool for promoting your business.

Specifically, a brochure can:

- Inform
- Educate
- Build image
- Establish credibility
- Sell (or help sell) a product or service
- Screen prospects
- Add value

In its most basic role, a brochure is a vehicle for providing information to prospects, customers, and others who want to know more about your product, process, program, system, service, company, idea, or plan. The brochure can be used to provide a basic education for the uninformed or to answer the specific questions a more knowledgeable prospect is likely to ask.

A brochure can also build image and establish credibility. Anybody can have business cards printed for \$10 and claim to be a company. But a sales brochure establishes immediate credibility and says to your prospects, "This is a *real* business, not a fly-by-night organization."

According to a study from Thomas Publishing, publishers of one of the country's largest industrial product directories, *90 percent* of all buyers in industry say they must see some type of "printed literature" before they put a product's manufacturer on their approved vendor list. In today's highly competitive business world, producing printed literature has become a necessity, not just a promotional stunt.

By making deliberate choices about the look, quality, and tone of your brochure, you can transmit an image to the reader. A slick, glossy brochure packed with attractive color photographs conveys an image of size, prosperity, and corporate professionalism. But a black-and-white flier on ordinary off-set paper may be more appropriate for a company that exterminates roaches and rats.

A brochure can do even more than give information and build image. With strong copy that stresses the benefits and advantages of a product or service, the brochure can be as effective a sales tool as an ad, TV commercial, or direct-mail campaign.

In addition to pulling in the right prospects, literature can weed out the wrong ones. Let's face it: Your product or service isn't for everyone. Some buyers can't afford your price; other buyers are better off with a different type of product. Literature that defines the applications and limitations of your product or service screens out those inquiries that don't represent real prospects. And screening leads with a brochure is a lot cheaper than making sales calls.

Promotional literature can add value to the product or service itself. For example, a purchasing agent may buy one brand of ball bearings over another, not because the first product is any better, but because the first manufacturer's catalog makes it easier to specify and order the bearings. In the same way, a well-written instruction manual for software is often more critical a factor in the product's success than the software itself.

And industrial manufacturers are not the only ones who need brochures. Practically every business and organization—service firms, retailers, consultants, free-lancers, educational institutions, trade associations, publishers—can benefit from describing their operations in printed form.

Five ways to put promotional literature to work

Smart business people don't just sit down and write a brochure. They first think about how they're going to use the brochure: who will read it, what it is designed to accomplish, and how it fits into the sales process.

Not every brochure serves the same function. For example, let's say you sell furnaces. You might have two separate brochures. The first describes the general benefits and nontechnical features of your furnace and is used to generate initial interest in the product at the beginning of the sales process. The second brochure is filled with detailed technical specifications. It answers

every question a contractor might have. It is used at the end of the sales process, when the homeowner has pretty much made a decision but wants to check with a trusted expert before shelling out \$2,500 for your furnace. The first brochure starts the selling process; the second helps close it.

Here are five ways in which you can put promotional literature to work for your firm:

1. **As a leave-behind**

As its name implies, a *leave-behind* is a piece of literature that you leave after a meeting with your prospect. A door-to-door encyclopedia salesperson, for example, probably won't close the sale with one visit. If colorful folders describing the encyclopedia are left behind, families can study this material at their leisure and make a decision without the pressure created by the presence of a salesperson.

Using a leave-behind ensures that the prospect knows where to reach you because the brochure includes your name, address, and phone number. Moreover, the leave-behind literature helps the prospect to recall the gist of your sales pitch.

2. **For inquiry-fulfillment**

When I was an advertising manager, our company's advertising and publicity campaign generated 19,000 inquiries a year. Obviously, we couldn't call all those people or visit them personally. So we mailed product brochures to give them the information they asked for.

The brochure was only part of the inquiry fulfillment package. We also sent a sales letter encouraging the prospect to contact our local area representative. And we included an order form, reply card, or other device the prospect could use to let us know her or his level of interest.

Mailing a brochure is the sensible first step in responding to advertising inquiries. Many people who inquire are only marginally interested, or maybe the product isn't right for them. The brochure lets you make contact with these folks for much less than the cost of a phone call or sales visit. Even the serious prospects may want to read a brochure in privacy before deciding whether it's worthwhile to call you, see your salesperson, or visit your store.

One way to increase inquiries from your advertising is to highlight the offer of the free literature in the copy. Instead of just printing your logo and address, say, "The tax-saving benefits of this new bond offering are described in a free, informative pamphlet, 'How to Invest Profitably in Municipal Bonds.' To receive your copy without cost or obligation, write or call us today."

If a brochure is to be used in inquiry fulfillment, be sure to give it a title that will make people want to send for it. Instead of the title, "Telecommunications Equipment and Services," call the brochure "How to Cut Your Long Distance Phone Bills by 50% or More." More people will send for your literature if they think it contains useful information instead of just straight sales talk.

3. As direct mail

Direct mail is a fast, efficient way of transmitting news to current customers and prospecting for new ones.

A manufacturer of office equipment maintains a computerized mailing list of people who have purchased equipment from the company. The manufacturer mails everyone on the list a different sales flier every month. Each month's flier announces a new product or a special sale on supplies and accessories for the old products.

An engineering firm wants to tell plant managers about its new inspection and maintenance service for wastewater treatment equipment. The company sends out a direct-mail package consisting of a letter, pamphlet, and reply card. The letter introduces the service and highlights the cost savings it offers to industrial plants. The pamphlet gives detailed facts on how the service works and what type of equipment it covers.

There's an old saying among direct-mail marketers: "The letter sells, the brochure tells." In a mailing package, the letter makes the sales pitch, and the brochure gives complete details and illustrates the product with drawings and photos.

Not every mailing requires a brochure. If your mailing is designed to generate sales leads, you can send a letter only and offer the brochure to readers who respond to the letter. If you're selling a product by mail order, you want to give complete details and should include a circular or illustrated folder.

If the product is familiar and easily understood, a letter may be all you need. But if it is unfamiliar, complex, or needs to be shown, include literature with your mailing.

4. As a point-of-sale display

Many merchants display racks of sales literature at the place the product or service is sold. Visit a travel agent's office and you'll find dozens of colorful pamphlets describing faraway places. Stop in at the local bank and you can pick up informative folders on CDs, IRAs, KEOGHs, money markets, and
