

## **31 -derfully Simple Ways To Make Your Ads Generate More Inquiries**

**By Bob Bly  
Copywriter**

A client recently phoned with a problem I'd encountered many times before. "Our new ad campaign's main goal is to create awareness and build image, not generate sales leads," the ad manager explained. "But my management still tends to judge ads by counting the number of inquiries they bring in. Is there some way I can increase my ad's pulling power without destroying the basic campaign concept?"

Fortunately, the answer is yes.

There are proven techniques you can use to increase *any* ads pulling power, whether your main goal is inquiries or image. Here are 31 techniques that can work for you:

1. Ask for action. Tell the reader to phone, write, contact his sales rep, request technical literature or place an order.
2. Offer *free* information, such as a color brochure or catalog.
3. Describe your brochure or catalog. Tell about its special features, such as a selection chart, planning guide, installation tips or other useful information it contains.
4. Show a picture of your brochure or catalog.
5. Give your literature a title that implies value. "Product Guide" is better than "catalog." "Planning Kit" is better than "sales brochure."
6. Include your address in the last paragraph of copy and beneath your logo, in type that is easy to read. (Also place it inside the coupon, if you use one).
7. Include a toll free number in your ad.
8. Print the toll-free number in extra-large type.
9. Put a small sketch of a telephone next to the phone number. Also use the phrase, "Call toll-free."
10. Create a hot line. For example, a filter manufacturer might have a toll-free hot line with the numbers 1-800-FILTERS. Customers can call the hot line to place an order to get more information on the manufacturer's products.
11. For a full-page ad, use a coupon. It will increase response 25% to 100%.
12. Make the coupon large enough that readers have plenty of room to write in their name and address.
13. Give the coupon a headline that affirms positive action -"Yes, I'd like to cut my energy costs by 50% or more."
14. Give the reader multiple response options-"I'd like to see a demonstration," "Have a salesperson call," "Send me a free planning kit by return mail."
15. For a fractional ad-one-half page or less-put a heavy dashed border around the ad. This creates the feel and appearance of a coupon, which in turn stimulates response.

16. In the closing copy for your fractional ad, say, "To receive more information, clip this ad and mail it to us with your business card."
17. A bound-in- business reply card, appearing opposite your ad, can increase response by a factor of two or more.
18. Use a direct headline-one that promises a benefit or stresses the offer of free information-rather than a headline that is cute or clever.
19. Put your offer of a free booklet, report, selection guide or other publication in the headline of your ad.
20. Offer a free gift, such a slide rule, metric conversion fable, pocket ruler, etc.
21. Offer a free product sample.
22. Offer a free consultation, analysis, recommendation, study, cost estimate, computer printout, etc.
23. Talk about the value and benefits of your free offer. The more you stress the offer, the better your response.
24. Highlight the free offer in a copy subhead. The last subhead of your ad could read, "Get the facts-*Free*."
25. In a two-page ad, run copy describing your offer in a separate sidebar.
26. Be sure the magazine includes a reader service number in your ad.
27. Use copy and graphics that specifically point the reader toward using the reader service number. For example, an arrow pointing to the number and copy that says, "For more information circle reader service number below."
28. Consider using more than one reader service number. For example, one number for people who want literature, another for immediate response from a salesperson.
29. In a full-page ad for multiple products, have a separate reader service number for each product or piece of literature featured in the ad.
30. Test different ads. Keep track of how many inquiries each ad pulls. Then run only those ads that pull the best.
31. Look for a sales appeal, key benefit, or theme that may be common to all of your best-pulling ads. Highlight that theme in subsequent ads.

-Robert W. Bly

*About the author:*

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