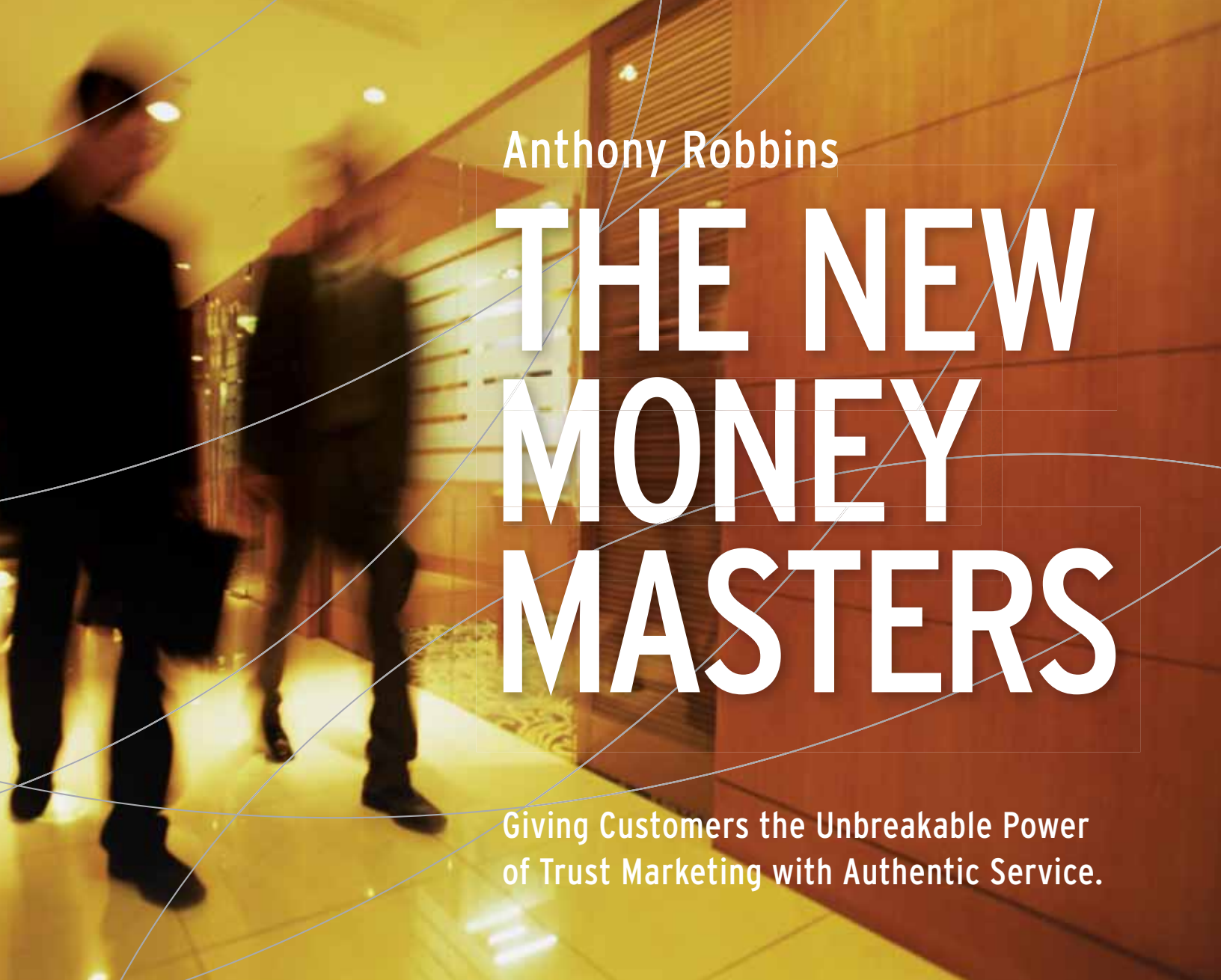




**Meetings with the Masters of Marketing.**  
An exclusive interview series by Anthony Robbins with the world's leading Internet marketing experts sharing easy-to-apply strategies for making money now.

*"The only way to become wealthy is to add more value to people's lives than anyone else is adding."*  
—Anthony Robbins



Anthony Robbins

# THE NEW MONEY MASTERS

Giving Customers the Unbreakable Power of Trust Marketing with Authentic Service.

Confessions of a Marketing Rebel:  
**John Carlton**

"How a Clueless Slacker Became a Notorious Marketing Wizard with Some Hooks, Killer Storytelling & Old-School Influence Secrets"

*Action Book*



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## Profile: John Carlton

John Carlton has been called “the most ripped-off and respected copywriter alive” and is widely regarded as the go-to expert on writing hyper-effective sales messages for Web sites, video scripts, social media, print ads and everything else necessary to make a business thrive.

John spent decades as one of a handful of the top freelance writers in the marketing world—commanding fees that caused unprepared clients to choke, getting booked for a year in advance by the largest mailers in the world and consistently creating pitches that sold like crazy.



As a teacher of copywriting, John is responsible for helping a verifiable mob of otherwise clueless marketers get their act together. The rabid testimonials on his home site—[www.marketingrebel.com](http://www.marketingrebel.com)—include nearly every famous and infamous online marketer in the game. He has touched a lot of lives.

John’s career arc is now legendary. He started out as the hotshot “secret weapon” freelancer whom Los Angeles ad agencies snuck in the back door to write the hard-hitting sales letters their own staffs couldn’t pull off, worked closely with direct-response giants Jay Abraham and Gary Halbert for years, was a pioneer in online marketing (among the first to use blogs, podcasts, e-mail and virtual seminars as effective sales tools) and remains at the cutting edge of Internet entrepreneurial adventures.



# Becoming “the Most Ripped-Off and Respected Copywriter” and Paying It Forward

John was raised in a working-class family and attended the University of California where he got a bachelor’s degree in psychology. He slacked off through most of college and throughout his twenties. He had a job in the art department of a direct-response catalog where he met his first copywriter. When he asked her how to learn to write, she responded, “It’s too tough, John. You’ll never figure it out.”

When John reached age 30, he realized that he needed to take control of his life. He had lost his place to live, his job and his girlfriend all in one month. He was homeless, living out of his car with only one tank of gas, and was sleeping on couches. He had no Plan B; he was at the end of his rope.

He had the epiphany that he was standing outside a feast at the frosted glass window watching everyone else having a blast inside. He realized that no one was going to invite him in and that he had to find the door and let himself in. For the first time in his life, he understood that if he wanted something enough, created a plan for how to get in and followed through, it might actually happen.

Inspired by the negative motivation his former coworker gave him, John became a freelance copywriter. He had no role models, so he started reading voraciously; he took a speed-reading class and read everything in the Dewey decimal system from 600 to 900 (all the books on advertising, sales, writing and marketing) in order to catch up with everyone else. What he discovered was that he ended up light-years ahead of them.

By accident, John met marketing guru Jay Abraham and started working for free in exchange for hanging out in Jay’s office during consultations. Through Jay, John met fellow marketing genius Gary Halbert and followed his heart away from the corporate world and toward helping entrepreneurs.

After being told copywriting was too difficult for him, John vowed, as soon as he figured it out, to help anyone who needed it. He wrote his book, *Kick-Ass Copywriting Secrets of a Marketing Rebel*, and started a newsletter and blog to share what he had learned over his years of experience. He also started teaching others how to write and realized that his biggest success was not in making himself money, but in making his clients independent and able to tackle what they once thought was impossible.





# The Simple Writing System: The 17-Step Checklist

This checklist of 17 steps to writing is a culmination of John's 25 years of experience as a freelance copywriter and teacher. Because he had no one to learn from and model when he first started out, he created his own list of all the things he learned over the years and used it when he was freelancing to make sure that he had covered everything.

John chose the title for this process very carefully. It's **Simple** because a lot of people are freaked out by writing and think it is a complex voodoo mystery. It's **Writing**, instead of copywriting, because really everything you need to do is just writing, whether it's an e-mail or a script for a video. It's a **System** because it is something that you can do and then repeat over and over again.

People are afraid of things they don't understand. When you are creating your copy and selling your product, service or information, you need to walk people through it, step-by-step, so as not to overwhelm them. Be there to hold their hand, and be able to explain it to them in different ways: this is how I understand it, this is how I've heard other people understand it and this is how other people get it.

## Step 1: Market Research

Before you even sit down to write, you need to find out about your market. This first step is the foundation for all of your writing. If you've done your research, when you do sit down to write, you will already know what you're going after and what you're going to say.

Finding out about your market is very simple: find out who your competitors are, go to their Web sites, read about them, buy their products and see what they do. Read the bulletin boards that post the pros and cons of their product or service; you will learn a lot of things that you can't find out if you went to a retail store and talked to a salesman. When you do this research, you will discover the holes in the industry and can use this to create or perfect your niche.

If you already own a company and have done market research in the past, look at how long ago it's been since you've evaluated your market. If you're still making your decisions based on an outdated market, your business will suffer. The world changes so much, and even five years ago in today's world—the Internet world—is like dog years.

### Understanding Your Market

Not understanding your market, according to John, is like getting on a bus, driving to the worst part of town, hopping off and walking down the first dark alley you find.

A good marketer will use GPS; they'll call the cops and find out what's going on in that part of town. They might even walk down the dark alley, but if they do, they'll be prepared. They'll have pit bulls armed to the teeth with guns and knives and a couple of big guys watching their back.

## The Myth of Writer's Block

Writer's block is a fictitious thing invented by people who are looking for excuses not to write. Writing is not a mysterious process where you apply secret voodoo to the page and suck people in; **writing is just telling a story**. If you've done your market research and are prepared, just sit down and start writing! You're going to go back and edit, fix it up, change parts, add sections, delete other paragraphs, whatever you want. As long as you get something down, you can start to craft what you really want to say.

In today's marketing world, you can test your copy very easily. The Web allows you to get immediate feedback from people so you can know what you need to change right away, without having to wait for it to get published to see what the impact may be.

If you're still stuck on how to get started writing, use this trick: if you've ever sold your product or service to someone, you know the pitch. Try recording yourself a few times, and then have that audio file transcribed so that you can see what you say.

**"Writer's block is merely a matter of not knowing what to do next."  
—John Carlton**

## Step 2: Your Avatar

In order to be a successful salesman, you have to understand who your customer is and what is going on inside their head. Getting into the mind of your prospect requires research: talk to everybody; don't just take one person's word for it. Leave ego out of this; you're trying to find out about your customer and get the actual truth. Find out why people are returning the product, what they are saying about it on the Internet. You need to understand their soft points—how to get them to say yes, or how to get them not to say no.

### Building an Avatar

An avatar is a character that represents your target audience. The process of building an avatar is essential to understanding the needs of your customers.

**Join the conversation that is already going on inside your customer's head.**

There is no one perfect avatar; some people might have three or four different types of customers that they are going after. You need to find out the demographics. Step inside their head and find out the story of their life: what are their desires, what are their wounds, what is influencing them, where do they want to go?

This way, when you get writer's block, you have more direction and focus, so you can sit down and ask yourself, "What do I need to say to Sally, a 44-year-old mother of two who hates her job and wants to find her true passion in life? What does she need to hear that lets me know that I understand what's going on?"

You also have to understand their level of trauma. Your product, service or information is selling a solution to someone who is in trauma. There are different levels, from someone who needs a nail to finish the swing set in their backyard to someone who just found out they have a life-threatening disease. All of your customers had something happen in their life, where the problem got to an unmanageable point that caused them to actively search for your solution.

**"A buying decision is an emotional decision."**

**—John Carlton**

### Step 3: Your Unique Selling Position (USP)

How are you positioning yourself in the market? Find something unique about yourself—there is always something unique to be found—and let people know what it is. What sets you apart? Why should people do business with you instead of someone else? You have to show your customers what you bring to the party.

For example, maybe you've been around for 25 years and have experience with thousands of people. Maybe you're the new kid on the block that the old guys are afraid of because you're selling more than they are. Whatever it is, identify it and lay it out for your customers.

With so many businesses being online now, the guy who is sitting at his kitchen table and who understands how to communicate to his customers can take on corporations with their own buildings, thousands of employees and vast resources. At the moment of action, if the prospect is on your site and you have their full attention, you have a shot!

### Step 4: Features and Benefits

Customers need to understand what it is you are offering them. To do this, deconstruct your market, business, product or service. Walk backwards and ask yourself, "What are the components of this? What is actually part of this?"

#### Features

The features of a product or service are the facts, the nuts and bolts, the vehicle used to create the benefits. A car has pistons, wheels, a roof, tires, etc. If you're selling an information product, it may include a book with 16 chapters, a DVD, an audio CD. If you have a seminar; when is it? How many days is it? How many hours each day?

#### Benefits

The benefits are what the features do for the customer. What you think you're selling is not what you're actually selling. You're not selling a seminar, you're selling the opportunity to change someone's life.

John uses something he calls the **one-two punch** when defining the benefits of a product. The first part is the **practical benefit**, the surface or obvious reason someone is buying your product or service. For example, if you sell nails and someone comes in to buy a few #10 nails to finish the swing set in his backyard, the practical benefit is that these nails will fix the swing set, which will then last through 25 winters and all kinds of weather.

The second part of John's system is the irrational, weird, edgy or **off-the-wall benefit**, the unconscious, deeper psychological level of why the customer really needs or wants your product. For the man fixing his swing set, that might be to save his marriage or to spend more time with his kids. This benefit stacks a psychological emotion, desire or wound onto the product or service.

## Step 5: Bullets

A bullet is a typographical character that can be anything from a circle to an arrow to a checkmark. Bullets are generally indented and set apart from regular text. They are scannable and easy to read and can vary in length from a phrase to a full paragraph.

Bullets serve as mini-stories that highlight the features and benefits of your product or service. It works well to list these because no transition is needed between bullets; there does not need to be any relationship at all. Stacking bullets is very valuable because you never know which bullet is going to be the one to trigger something in your customer.

Here is an example of how to use bullets in your copy:

### **The Simple Writing System teaches you how to:**

- Use bullets in your copy.
- Effectively define the features and benefits of your product.
- Understand your customer by building an avatar.

**You can never tell which bullet is going to flip somebody.**

## Step 6: Testimonials

Testimonials are essentially third-party endorsements from customers of your product or service explaining the benefits it has had on their life. They also serve as invaluable information for you, the business owner or entrepreneur, about what you can do to improve your product or service so that you can stay on top and be the go-to guy in the market that everyone else is chasing.

Testimonials are something that a lot of people miss out on because they never ask the people who bought their product or service what they thought of it. Even if you don't use testimonials, collect them anyway. Encourage people to write in and comment on your blog or Web site, or set up a whole department for customer service that allows people to call in. Don't wait to contact your customers; follow up right away so that their impression is fresh in their minds.

Only 20 percent of people believe in the advertisements they see, but 75 percent of people believe something they hear through word-of-mouth. You can have the best pitch in the world, but a potential customer knows that you are the salesman. If your product or service gets social recognition from a third party, they are significantly more likely to believe it's true. People read testimonials to get validation of the message they are getting from your pitch.

The best testimonials have pictures that are believable. They are specific in identifying the person talking (or writing); instead of Jack C. in Indiana, it's Jack Calhoun from the Donuts-R-Us shop in downtown Indiana. It is very effective to stack testimonials. John likes to create a "Wall of Testimonials," a column on one or both sides of a Web site including both written and video testimonials. You can help your customers with the testimonials; clean up and compress what they wrote or recorded, and send it back to them for their approval—you have to keep the message interesting and relevant.

## Step 7: Hooks

Hooks are the incongruous juxtaposition of compelling sales elements. In other words, it is taking people out of the passive state and waking them up. To do this, you have to be outrageous. Take common wisdom and turn it on its head. Give your customer a reason to find out more, quench their thirst for more information and engage them.

**A hook is like fishing: you reach out, you grab them and you reel them in.**

Finding the hook is not just about the image a company or customer portrays. You have to do your homework. Don't just interview the CEO or owner because they will tell you why they think their customers are buying and what they think their product is about. Talk to the secretary, the feet-on-street salespeople and the employees working in the mailroom. Find out the rumors, get the gossip, see what they're saying behind the owner's back—that's where the hook comes from.

Here are some examples of hooks that John has used in his copywriting:

### **The Amazing Secrets of a One-Legged Golfer**

### **How a Young Skinny Kid from Visalia Learned to Hit 400-Yard Drives**

### **Amazing Human Computer Humiliates Wall Street for 21 Consecutive Years**

## Step 8: Salesmanship Mentality

People have a weird image about selling; they think about the guy in a checkered coat at the used-car lot. But the truth is **everybody sells; in fact, you're selling all the time**. Salesmanship is how the world runs.

Everyone has what John calls an **inner sleeping salesman**. If you're married, if you've ever gotten a job that you didn't think you were going to get, if you've ever convinced a friend to go see a movie they wouldn't have seen otherwise, if you've ever told a joke at a party, you've woken up your inner salesman and put them to work.

Don't give in to the idea that you have to be someone else or take on a different personality to sell. Your own authentic self is the real power behind selling. If you try to put on a fake persona, you will push people away. If you have a great product or service that you truly believe in and truly believe will benefit the lives of your customers, then shame on you if you're not doing everything you can to get it to them because you are depriving them of having a better life.

**"People only part with their money when they're parting with it for something that's worth more to them than money."**

**—Tony Robbins**

## Step 9: Develop Your Voice

The best marketers, the best copywriters, the people who produce the best sales conversation, they devour life. They live large lives with mucho gusto; they actually get into life, engage and live big. This allows them to know both worlds: the world that their customers live in, and the world their customers would like to be in. It allows them to take their customers to where they want to go because they've already been there.

Don't try to be someone you're not. People appreciate authenticity and want to do business with someone who is real and not pretending. What you do spontaneously is usually the real you. Let that come through; that is your voice. John uses language that would make an English teacher faint—it's completely full of slang and improper grammar, but it works because it connects with people.

## Step 10: Headline

Headlines are an attention-getting device. A headline starts the conversation or continues it if someone comes to your Web page through a link or pay-per-click ad. The headline is crucial because it is the first piece that opens the eyes of the customer.

### Ways to Write Headlines

One of the easiest ways to create a headline is to use the phrase “how to” up front. It is very simple, cliché and overused, but it works. If you tell them how to do it, you break the ice and target your customers immediately.

Here are some examples of “how to” headlines:

**How to Fix a Flat Tire in Traffic in Five Minutes or Less So You Don't Have to Use Your AAA Card**

**How to Ask Your Doctor the Questions About Kidney Stones That He Wouldn't Otherwise Tell You**

### Shout-out

When you're first starting out and you don't have your list built up yet but want to get people's attention, use what John calls the **shout-out**. Go out to the massive audience of people and shout out something to get people's attention, for example, “BOWLERS ARE BALD GUYS.” If your shout-out isn't working, come up with something different until you render responses.

## Power Words

You can turn advertisements from producing nothing to producing massive results with the shift of a single word: the **power word**. Most people write very boringly. If you use language that packs a punch and whacks someone upside the head, they will stop and pay attention. Wake people up and bring them out of their passive behavior—where there is no retention—by writing copy that actually engages and creates interaction with your customers.

Power words are words that produce visceral meanings. If someone is reading your advertisement or sales copy and it generates a powerful emotion inside of them, you have reached them on a deeper level. For example, instead of saying ABC Company beat all their competitors, say they humiliated them. Some other examples of power words are accidentally, stumbled upon and murder.

## Step 11: Your Sales Funnel

The sales funnel is the process of what happens to your customer or prospect when they come into your world. You need to move them along, lead them by the hand and don't let them wander. This part of the system needs to be planned out so that once you have a prospect, there is somewhere for them to go. Are you going to sell them? Are you going to give them a free product? Are you going to establish the relationship before the sale, during the sale or after the sale? Do you have a membership site? Take away the mystery of the next steps. People respond better to single options; if there are too many choices, people make no choice.

A lot of people spend their whole lives walking on the side of the pool, asking the people who are in the pool, "Is it cold? Is it deep? Is there a lot of chlorine? Do I have to know how to swim?" A good marketer will tell that person to bend down so they can whisper something to them and then will pull them in the pool. Human nature sometimes keeps people from acting in their best interests; people need your help to cross that line, to jump in the pool.



## Step 12: Simple Basics of a Great Sales Message

Salesmanship is the same now as it was back when the first caveman traded up to a cave with a better view in exchange for a slab of mastodon meat. It's an exchange of value. Your job is to show the prospect the value you offer. Writing is just sending out a little salesperson who connects with your prospect and convinces them that what you have is valuable to them. It's salesmanship in print, according to Claude Hopkins.

A great sales message is a conversation where you map out four elements:

### 1. Who You Are

Establish with your customer that you are someone they can trust. Tell them who you are. They need more than your name, rank and serial number, so tell them your background. Position yourself in your prospect's mind, and explain who you are in a way that is advantageous to them. Establish yourself as an authority.

### 2. What You Are Offering

Explain your product, service or information in a way that is very basic. Spell out the features.

### 3. What It Will Do for Your Customer

Now that they know exactly what they are getting, show them what that will do for them. Walk them through the benefits. It's not just a book—it's a book that will change their lives by showing them the techniques and skill sets they need to make massive improvements. You're helping the person do something better, or achieve something they couldn't achieve before, or gain entrance into a world that they otherwise did not have access to or solve a problem.

### 4. What They Need to Do Now

Walk your prospect to the next step, whether it's to sign up for a free trial, join the membership site or buy the product. Hold their hand and show them what to do; otherwise, you might lose them.

## Step 13: Huge Promise

The huge promise is the culmination of preparing your mind-set, your tools of persuasion and your deep understanding of the need of your prospect coupled with the benefits of your product or service. Deliver your product or service on a silver platter, and tempt your prospect to the point of desperation.

You can't go into business being meek—you have to be bold. Make sure your promise stands out. Pile it on (or stack, as many Internet marketers say). Leave your clients with a sense of wonderment. Watch out for the unbelievable offer; if it's too good to be true, people will have a hard time believing it really is true.

## Step 14: Reverse All Risk

One of the reasons customers hesitate to move forward with a product or service is the risk involved in buying—what if they make a mistake and don't really want the product or don't use it? Reverse those risks or take all the risks for them, so that your prospect feels safe because you are shouldering the burden of proof and satisfaction. Make it a no-brainer: assure your customer that they are not risking a dime because they can always get their money back.

Buyer's remorse, like writer's block, doesn't really exist. All it means is that the buyer lost track of why they bought the product or service in the first place. Arm your customers with a victory speech so that when they start to question or they go home to a skeptical spouse or a neighbor who always wants to one-up them, they have reasons, tiny blurbs, of why this product or service is so beneficial.

One example of reducing risk is to increase your guarantee times. John has found that the longer the guarantee, the less returns you receive. When you extend this, you take away the pressure to get money back as soon as possible. Once the pressure's gone, you remove the risk from buying.

## Step 15: Turbulence

Be the guy who says the things everyone is thinking but doesn't want to say. Political correctness, or any kind of correctness for that matter, has no place when you're starting relationships with customers. Give yourself the permission to say what needs to be said. Have some fun and try stuff you normally wouldn't do.

Don't be afraid to offend people. **Polarized people buy.** Passive people are happy just sitting there. If you're not getting complaints about what you've written, if you don't have a 7–12% refund rate, you're not pushing hard enough.

### Example: Forbidden Sex Secret Ad

John was brought in to work on a new product for *Prevention* magazine that showed people how to improve the intimacy in their relationships. It was a set of books and DVDs by real doctors from John Hopkins and Harvard. When John first started working on the product, the title was "How to Spice Up Your Intimacy with Your Significant Other"; he quickly determined that by its current marketing, it was not a product that he would buy.

The company didn't like his first headline, "The Amazing Sex Secrets of the Happiest and Most Respected Lovers in the World," so John came up with a different approach. He created an opening to their sales letter:

*Now it's your turn to finally discover for free why so many of the world's happiest couples insist on these explosive, FORBIDDEN SEX SECRETS. They're the key to quickly recharging the passion, intimacy and super exciting romance in your relationship. Get ready to take your lovemaking beyond the bedroom and beyond the ho-hum routine and way beyond the basics.*

The company didn't like this approach either, so they paid him and let him go. Fortunately for John and the company, one of their saleswomen snuck the copy into their direct-mail rotation, and it went on to beat their top writers for five consecutive years.

## **Step 16: Knock 'Em Off the Fence**

It's pretty easy to get people up onto the fence—even rookie marketers can get prospects to admit that they think you have a good product or you're a nice guy and will think about buying your product some day in the future.

The mistake that most people make, especially entrepreneurs, is that they sell from their heels. They get to the point where they need to ask for money or ask for the sale, and they back off. An experienced salesman knows that you usually only get one shot at someone and then they're gone.

Your job is to knock them off that fence and get them to take action *right now*. You have to understand that you are not just trying to give a stellar presentation; you are here to get a result, an action and an outcome.

## **Step 17: The Close**

You can “wow” a prospect and get them so eager about your product or service that they actively seek additional information on what you have to offer, but if you can't close the deal, all you have is an eager, active prospect who isn't buying.

Follow through. Walk your client to the end of the process; don't just stop after you've made your presentation. Add more value until your prospect realizes that they can't live without your product or service. Close the deal by making it irresistible.

## YOUR ACTION PLAN

Tony Robbins ends his programs by having you take immediate action on what you've learned. Remember, the first step to lasting momentum is taking massive and specific action in the moment. Take a minute now to think about John's strategies and how they can apply to your own business or life. Answer the following questions:

1) What two distinctions have you now made as a result of what you've learned? How will these principles change your life and/or business for the better?

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2) What are two actions (one big, one small) you can take right now? What will you immediately apply/change/do/decide today to make the biggest difference in your life?

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**“The world is a feast out there. There is so much to enjoy. Don't look through the frosted glass outside; no one is going to invite you in. Take control. Get in there. Start making it happen.”**

**—John Carlton**

# Money Masters Article: John Carlton

## Salesmanship 101

### The Essence of World-Class Copywriting

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The tangible parts of world-class salesmanship are extremely easy to figure out if you follow the simple and identifiable steps that are broken down into four separate parts in the article below. The key is to go back to the foundation: really understand your customer and get to know them, figure out what it is they really want and how you can improve their lives with your product or service.

#### The Convenience Factor

Doing the right thing is often the wrong thing to do in business. Here's the common wisdom: to really help someone, don't give them a fish—which would only feed them for a day—but rather teach them how to fish—which would allow them to eat every day. And here's what's wrong with the common wisdom: in business, you can often charge a hundred times more by giving your customer a fish rather than teaching them how to fish.

**Here's the scenario:** Let's say you sell real estate. You've done it for years, you're really, really good at it and you're ready to share with other people how to do it right—how to gauge the psychology of customers, how to write compelling ads, how to conduct yourself during a hot sales pitch. And that's a fine ambition. Plenty of people will sign up and pay you to learn these secrets and do the hard work of learning the craft.

However, there are plenty more people eager to pay you even *more* money **to have you do everything FOR them.** Give them the exact ad they need to run, and tell them when and where to run it. Give

them a simple psychological “cheat sheet” profile card for each of the six types of people they will deal with, telling them exactly what to say and when to say it. And give them a sales pitch they can learn by rote, word for word.

In short take away all the “x” factors, and allow them to conduct their professional lives

**Remember this:** It's why the masses prefer the hand-holding kindergarten-level Web access of AOL over the slightly more complex but infinitely more *usable* option of becoming their own server.

Don't get caught up in the idea that you can evangelize the world by teaching everyone how to “do it themselves.” That works for some people, but they'll pay much more just to have you do it *for* them. Point and shoot will forever outsell “learn to figure it out.”

## Simple and Easy Secrets to World-Class Copy

One of the most common errors in advertising is bragging. This will eviscerate your marketing efforts. The worst examples are on TV: “Pontiac...where excellence and perfection meet.” Slogans only work if you follow this rule: if you use a slogan, make it a pithy compaction of your unique sales proposition (“Floyd’s Furniture: Inexpensive knock-offs of fancy Italian designs, made in America with better quality materials than the originals...and guaranteed for life!”).

**A simple test:** If any other business could adopt your slogan without changes (“Simply the Best,” or anything with the word “solution” in it), then your stupid slogan isn’t saying *anything* of importance to your customers.

Even ads that are trying to follow good direct-response principles suffer from a general lack of backing up what they say. Take the overused term “simple and easy.” People have been reading those words so long that they’re almost meaningless, yet your customers really *do* want everything to be simple and easy. They are terrified of discovering, after purchase, that what they now own is actually “complex and difficult.” So you are strongly advised to explain how simple and easy your product or service really is.

The smart salesman knows how to do this. You must turn the phrase “simple and easy” into a **vibrant image**. *Show* them—don’t just *tell* them.

**Here’s how:** When selling instructional golf videos, John became keenly aware that most golfers believed the game was incredibly difficult to learn. Even when articles in the magazines raved about some tactic being “simple and easy,” what they meant was it would take you only a few months to learn rather than a few years. So just telling a reader that learning how to hit a longer, straighter drive was “simple and easy” wouldn’t do the trick he had to

*illustrate* the point. He came up with a “four ball guarantee.” Lots of golf products offer a “100% guarantee,” but John’s was different. He told the prospect to order the video, watch it and immediately go out and line up four golf balls. Then *hit* them, using what they had just learned in the video. If they weren’t launching 300-yard dead-solid-perfect tee shots by the fourth ball, then he *insisted* they return the video for a full refund. Four balls—that’s “simple and easy,” *illustrated*.

Remember the “Seven—Minute Ab Workout”? Not the “Simple and Easy Abdominal Exercise Program.” Seven minutes—anyone can wrap their mind around that, and most folks can imagine doing something for seven minutes without too much grief. Sounds simple. *Easy*.

**The obvious question:** How do you decide on four balls or seven minutes? The psycho in *Something About Mary* had a plan to sell a “Six-Minute Ab Workout.” Hey, why not a three-minute workout? Why not *30 seconds*?

**The answer is believability:** You set up the imagery with the concept of hitting four balls. Then you back it up with substance: “Why four balls? Because you’ll hit the first one like you always do. But the second ball will show amazing new distance as your muscles get used to the simple change in your swing, and on your third swing you’ll see accuracy like you can’t believe. And when you hit that last ball, you’ll see a true, straight, absolutely monster-level shot sail away with eyes for the fairway. That’s how easy this really is.”

Make your promise real with *imagery*, and back it up with *substance*. Those are the simple and easy secrets to world-class copy.

## The Romance of Marketing

A key component of great salesmanship is learning how to bond with your customer, so they feel good about sending you money.

Have you ever watched a world-class athlete get psyched up for a race or a game? They get into a “zone” where the world looks decidedly different than it does at any other time. The opposing team becomes the hated enemy, worthy only of humiliation and subjugation. Winning becomes an almost spiritual obsession. They focus and refocus on their skills and tricks and gameplan.

They become a *machine* who thinks differently than they normally do.

**It’s the same with world-class salesmen.** Just before pitching a prospect, they must get into their own “zone” and start thinking differently than they normally do. Suddenly, any opinion they have is not worth bringing up. What *they* want or wish for or desire is irrelevant. Their own needs climb into the backseat. The **ONLY** thing that counts is what the *prospect* thinks, wants, wishes for, desires and needs.

The best salesman in the force is often not the handsome devil with the perfect coif and the snappy suit. Often, the real killer in the bunch is the schleppey, balding little mutt who always looks like he slept in his clothes and sounds like he missed every English class after the fifth grade. It’s the same with winning ads. Why? Because customers are real people, and they resonate with other real people (and stuff written by real people). It’s not how you look but what your substance is. And people will dole out money to salesmen who are friendly, sincere **and obsessed with making them happy**—really, *really* happy.

Most people slog through their days in a dark funk. They almost never get to do anything interesting or go to interesting places or meet interesting people. They are ignored by marketers who want them to buy

their overpriced junk and be grateful for it. They feel disrespected, unappreciated and taken for granted.

Nobody wants to take the time to listen to their fears, dreams, hopes and needs. **And that’s your opening.**

Whether you’re writing an ad, filming a TV spot or doing some good old face-to-face selling, pull up a chair and get *simpatico* with your prospect. Don’t come on like a corporate robot with any “We have perfected the art of perfection” bull. Don’t brag, as if anybody cares how proud you are to announce the opening of your next store. And for God’s sake, don’t lecture as if you are Knowledge Incarnate and your prospect should be wetting themselves just to be in your presence.

**Instead, do a little bonding.** Right off the bat, let ’em know that you hate taxes just as much as they do, that you’re at least as big a golf nut as they are, that you share the same headaches, passions, frustrations and joys as they do. Let them know you’re a human being, you’re worth knowing (because you share their views) *and you have something exciting for them.*

Bonding is not brain surgery. **It’s simply putting yourself into a “zone” where your prospect’s life, needs and fears are your *only* focus.** Give them some attention. Titillate them with some gossip or a story that will please them. Don’t bully them with your sales pitch—rather, *seduce* them with benefits, and let them come to their own conclusion to buy.

Think of marketing as romance. You sell something in the \$20 range, and it’s like asking for a date. You start selling stuff over \$99, and it’s like going steady. And when you ask for the really big bucks, it’s a lot like getting married. The persuasion needed for a date is much less than what’s necessary to win someone’s hand for eternity. *But it’s still persuasion.* And that requires bonding.

If you’re still having trouble bonding, read the classic *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie. Your entire life will change overnight.



Knowing the secrets of bonding is like having God come down and personally introduce you to folks. **It's the secret of instant acceptance and trust.**

## The Art of Persuasion

You know what world-class salesmen do that you don't? **They practice the art of persuasion every day**, with everyone they come in contact with, both at the job and in their private lives. They know that to become a master of persuasion, you must become obsessed with it. No matter how good your product or service is, your prospect doesn't really want it. They don't want to be sold, don't want to feel any urgency about finding out more, and certainly don't want to pull out their wallet. You must *persuade* them.

Think of this prospect as a huge blob so overcome with inertia it will not move quickly to save its own life. That's what you have to imagine you're up against. And your job is to light a fire under this blob's butt and get it to move and think and feel and desire. Even more daunting, you must motivate this blob to pull out its wallet, pick up a phone and call a stranger to order something that, 15 minutes ago, it didn't even know existed.

**Listen carefully:** People are not sitting around desperately hoping for a marketer like you to come into their lives and sell them something. Mostly, they resent your presence. They resent you having something they want. And they resent, most of all, you giving them an itch that can only be scratched by buying what you have.

Most ads mumble and equivocate. Most letters are almost apologetic about asking for action.

The closest many writers get to a sales pitch is to say, in effect, "Here I am. How much do you want?" No persuasion at all. No attempt to capture the heart and mind of their prospect.

**It's a tough thing to do, persuade.** People will stubbornly NOT do what is in their own best interest. People do not like being taken out of their comfort zone, even when faced with undeniable evidence.

This stumps rookie salesmen. They have something of quality, something that will actually help the prospect and is a genuine value, and they get frustrated when a simple presentation of the facts *isn't enough* to induce action. So they lecture, argue, cajole, even scold the prospect—all wrong.

Great salesmen know that you can't push anyone toward a sale. You have to convince them they're making the decision to buy *all on their own*. Saying "You need this" will only strengthen resistance. Saying "You *can't have this*" (a classic take-away tactic) triggers desire.

There are tricks to persuasion—clever techniques and shrewd psychology you can use to talk like a salesman. It will pay off *quickly* to learn these things. But it's just as important to practice the attitude of persuasion throughout your day. If you can't persuade your buddy to go eat at a new deli around the corner, you're going to have trouble convincing a stranger with your copy to buy anything from you.

Practicing persuasion is fun if you have the right attitude. You are, essentially, a social scientist collecting data and testing methods. You're also a spy, working undercover to develop the amazing skills that will make you powerful. Don't keep score as you practice—just pay attention to your prospect, and observe how your tactics work and don't work. You'll find out quickly that you cannot bully anyone into making a decision. You'll find that throwing a tantrum is pointless. And you'll discover that lecturing can empty a room of even eager potential customers.

It's like putting money in the bank. You'll reinforce all the proven tactics in your own mind.



You'll learn how necessary it is to bond first, to establish credibility without bragging, to tease effectively and to good-naturedly build desire without appearing to do so as well as how potent third-party testimonials can be ("Okay, so don't believe me; ask Joe").

Start today. Get someone to go see a movie they wouldn't otherwise consider. Sell your significant other on doing something they have heretofore refused to do. Generate some real unexpected excitement in someone's life. *Then notice how much romance, feeling, empathy and concentration are required to successfully persuade.*

It ain't easy, but it is the essence of world-class advertising.



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