

THE GARY HALBERT LETTER

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The Boron Letters - Chapter 13

Sunday, 9:02 AM
June 24, 1984

Dear Bond,

Well, I've found myself a little hideaway near the top of "The Hill" and I am sitting cross-legged (yoga style) on a blanket and I am looking out over good old Camp Boron and writing you this letter.

Did you pay attention to yesterday's lessons? Have you noticed how I have already used, in this letter, many of the little ideas I talked about yesterday?

You did notice? Good. Then I guess it's safe to go on.

But before I do (there's a baby rabbit about 7 yards from me!) I want to tell you that I just talked to your mom and it put some pain in my brain. She works hard and now that I am in here she more or less feels she's out there all alone against the wolves. Rick wants money. Chuck wants money. Your mom has bills and I feel very pressured.

It hurts.

But you once said the smartest thing I've ever heard a kid say. You said that you were luckier than Jeff because when Jeff lived with me I was already rich and that you get to be with me when I am not rich and, therefore, you get to learn how I solve problems, especially money problems.

Well, maybe we can both learn something today. (NOTE: I say "well" almost as often as Ronnie Reagan, don't I?) What I feel like doing is sniveling. I'd love to take some drugs or alcohol and forget my problems. Or maybe just lie on my bunk all day and read a book.

At the very least I'd like to eat. But I can't. I can't because this is my day to fast. And to write to you. And to Z. And to work on a new ad for L. Etc.

And, so I shall. Not because (that bunny is still right here!) I want to but, rather, because I need to. You see, when things are tough I have discovered that a very very simple (but effective) thing to do is just keep moving in some sort of positive direction.

And... and... let's talk about envelopes and little baggies filled with dirt. O.K. as I recall, I was just about to tell you how to use a SRE to induce guilt in a regular commercial DM sales pitch.

Here's how: What you do is write something like this:

...and so, Mr. Jones, as you can see, what I am offering you is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to own a piece of a legalized Nevada whorehouse. I hope you can take advantage of this offer. But, if you can't, would you please drop me a note and tell you can't participate at this time. That way I'll feel free to make this exciting offer to someone else. I've enclosed a self-addressed envelope and I have even put a stamp on it because (either way) it is important that I hear from you right away.

*Please, please -- reply **today!***

Many lessons in that little block of copy. First of all, it's not just a guilt inducer, it also develops a strong selling point: Namely, the selling point of this being a genuine limited offer that some other lucky person will take advantage of if you don't. And, the stamped envelope tends to "credential" that point. (I just made a noise and my little bunny slipped away.) Here's something else: If you can get a person who is not going to order to agree, in his mind, to write and tell you he is not going to, then you will get more orders.

Can you guess why? Aha, you didn't get this one, did you, smart Alec? No matter. I'll tell you why. You see, what happens sometimes is that a person who is getting a pen or pencil and a piece of paper in order to write you and tell you "No" will sometimes start thinking like this: "Well, you jerk. I'd kind of like to get in on this deal anyway and now that I've got the pen and paper I may as well go ahead and order."

Now, let's switch our discussion to another kind of envelope where you also pay the postage for your customer. I'm talking about, of course, the good old standby known as a BRE or "Business Reply Envelope".

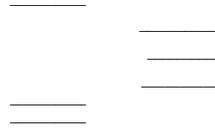
You've seen thousands of BRE's. They look like this:

Bulk Rate

Permit #

6666

Nevada Inc.
201 Anywhere Rd.
Las Vegas, NV 20215



Most mailers love BRE's. They have the advantage of making it easy for the customer to reply plus the advantage of being much cheaper than a stamped reply envelope.

The reason they are cheaper is that you only pay the postage (and BRE fee) for those envelopes that are actually mailed back to you.

However, they also have some disadvantages. Like these:

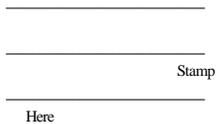
1. They slow up your mail. The post office has to tabulate how many BRE's you get each day so they'll know how much you owe. This will hold up your mail (and your cash flow!) for at least one extra day. Maybe more.

2. They telegraph that yours is not, in fact, a real personal letter. You know, sooner or later, you've got to let your potential customers know that you want him to buy something. However, if you let him know immediately quite often he won't even give you a hearing. And, in truth, this is a disservice to him. Because, quite often, after he reads your info he will discover that what you have to offer has genuine value to him.

So try to strategize your mailings so that he at least reads your letter before he makes a decision.

3. You can't do good guilt with a BRE. BRE's are much better for this purpose.

And now, let's talk about yet another type of reply envelope. I call it the PSH envelope. PSH stands for "Place Stamp Here". They look like this:



Place

Nevada Inc.
201 Anywhere Rd.
Las Vegas, NV 20215

This is the most economical reply envelope of all. That's because (obviously) the customer pays the postage. Let's talk about this envelope: First of all, it's not as convenient for the customer so you will lose some orders because of that. On the other hand, this envelope is more personal so you will gain some orders because of that.

(Guess what, Bondy? I think a solution to your mom's money problems just popped into my mind!)

Now, of course, this envelope isn't as personal as an SRE but it is more than a regular BRE. It is, as I have pointed out, cheaper than both.

What it is, then, is cheaper than a SRE and more personal than a BRE and, in my judgment, this is the best envelope for most mailers to use.

More mailers should test PSH envelopes and carefully analyze the results. Many of them are going to be surprised.

DAMN! I'm getting a little tired of writing about envelopes. I think I'll switch over to discussing that little baggie filled with dirt.

However, my hour is up and I've got to go stand count. (They want to know where I am all the time. They must like me!)

Tune in again tomorrow.

I Love You and Good Luck,

Dad