

THE GARY HALBERT LETTER

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The Boron Letters - Chapter 11

Friday, 9:07 AM
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Dear Bond,

As I left you yesterday, we had just came up with a working title for our real estate investment report. I believe it was "The Amazing L.A. Roadmap To Real Estate Riches!"

Maybe we can come up with a better title but this one is fine. At least for now. I believe we have also discussed extracting the goodies from several real estate books and we have collected and examined other DM pieces and MO ads for books and so forth that deal with real estate investments. We know how to choose a list to test and now it's time for us to create the DM promotion.

The first thing we are going to discuss is the outside envelope. This is where most mailers mess up first. You see, what most mailers do is put so-called "teaser copy" on the outside envelope and, in general, design the envelope so that it is very obvious that it contains a sales pitch.

If you will turn the page, I will show you what a typical direct mail outer envelope looks like. Whoops. We're here already!

ABC
Publishing
Bulk

209 - 5th
Ave.
Rate
New York, NY
10049
6666
{corner card with company name}

{bulk rate indicia with
a permit number}

*WOW! There is
exciting news
inside!*
{teaser copy}

John Jones
2193 - 7th St.
Akron, OH 10104
{Cheshire label}

Pretty obvious, isn't it? In time, you are going to read my semi-famous A-Pile, B-Pile lecture. But here is a preview:

It is my contention that everybody divides their mail every day into two piles. An "A-Pile" and a "B-Pile". The "A" pile contains letters that appear to be personal. Like letters from friends, relatives, business associates, and so on.

On the other hand, the "B" pile contains those envelopes that, like the example above, obviously, contain a commercial message.

Now, here's the way it works: Everybody always opens all of their "A" pile mail.

And, for obvious reasons. After all, everybody wants to read their personal mail.

What happens to the "B" pile mail? Does it always get opened? No. It doesn't. Sometimes it is thrown away immediately without the envelope ever being opened. Sometimes, if it looks interesting, "B" pile envelopes will be set aside for later examination. And, of course, sometimes... **IF** the envelope looks interesting, or **IF** the person receiving it has some idle time, or **IF** the person is bored and has nothing else to do, than, **MAYBE** the "B" pile envelopes will be opened.

Unsatisfactory.

Quite obviously, people aren't getting to order from you unless they read your promotion and, also, quite obviously, they can't read your promotion unless they open the envelope.

And so, my dear son, what is our first objective here, as we begin to design our DM promotion? You are right! Our first objective is to get our envelope into the "A" pile.

And, it's so easy to do! All we have to do is make the envelope look personal. (Or at least we will take pains so it doesn't look commercial.) Here is what our envelope should look like:

20¢
209 - 5th
Ave.
Live
New York, NY
10049
Stamp

{corner card with return address ONLY;
no company name}

{an honest-to-God live
1st class stamp}

John Jones
2193 - 7th St.
Akron, OH 10104
{a handwritten or typed address; no label}

Nearly everybody who receives this envelope will open it. Why? The answer, as a copywriter would say, is simple. A person who gets this envelope will open it to find out what is inside. Because it is intriguing. Because it looks personal. Because it might be from someone he knows. Because it does not OBVIOUSLY contain a personal message.

Yes, my dear son, for all these good reasons, the person who gets this envelope will open it in order to find out what is inside.

You see, the "B" pile envelope let's the recipient know right from the jump that it contains a commercial message. And, of course, the recipient ALREADY KNOWS that this envelope does not contain any sort of personal communication.

Too bad. Too bad for the mailer, that is. Because, and this should be painfully apparent, because if only half as many people open your envelope, only half as many even have a CHANCE to order!

So obvious, so simple and so OVERLOOKED!

Yes, it's true. As obvious as this should be, it is missed by almost every advertising agency and nearly every so-called "direct mail expert" in the country.

So, I'll get off my podium. If I haven't made my point by now, shame on me. And, now, let's assume that we have designed an "A" pile envelope and we are relatively sure that our envelope will be opened. What's next? What's next is that we must now get our potential customer to begin reading our sales letter.

How do we do that? Well, let's start by getting his attention. And intriguing the heck out of him right from the start. Let's try this: Let's get a little plastic baggie and put some dirt in it and then attach it to the top of our letter. Here is what the letter will look like:

*[little zip lock baggie
attached here with
dirt inside]*

Friday, 6:30 p.m.
June 12, 1984
[typed day and date and time]

Dear Mr. Jones,
[personal salutation]

~~~~~  
~~~~~  
~~~~~.  
*[body copy]*

~~~~~  
~~~~~  
~~~~~  
~~~~~.  
*[body copy]*

~~~~~  
~~~~~  
~~~~~.  
[body copy]

(over)
*[little directive that tells the
reader what to do from here]*

Pay attention: What I have just shown you contains several of my little-known DM secrets. Let's examine them one by one.

First of all, that little baggie filled with dirt just sort of reaches right out and grabs you, doesn't it?

If you received this letter, wouldn't you be wondering, *"What's in this baggie?" "Is that dirt in there?" "Why would somebody be sending me a baggie of dirt?"*

And, consciously or unconsciously, you would be thinking, *"I better read this and find out what it is all about."*

And, you see, we now have not only captured our reader's attention, we have gotten his "focused" attention.

Quality attention.

Now, what about that part right above the salutation? The part that contains the day, date and time. What is the significance of all this? Tune in tomorrow and see!

I Love You and Good Luck!

Dad

Yesterday I ran (jogged) the hill 5 times non-stop in 58 minutes and 18 seconds and after the run I weighed 176-1/2 pounds.