

THE LIST

Marketing expert Ian Simpson offers ten tips to make catalogues work harder for you

**#01
DEFINE A BRAND IMAGE**

As a brand led society, we strive to be identified with the products we buy and where we buy them. So one of the first steps is to define your positioning statement and make sure that the execution of a catalogue supports it. This will create an instantly recognisable sales vehicle and is equally important in both B2B and consumer markets.

**#02
DIRECT EYEFLOW**

Eyeflow is vital as catalogues are 'read' in predictable ways. Research by Siegfried Vögele shows how a reader enters a spread top right, tracks across to the middle left and exits bottom right. This creates exploitable hotspots and dead areas. Good typography, pictures and graphics direct the reader around the page and through the catalogue.

**#03
GET THE COVER RIGHT**

The cover is the most important page, and must tell the reader everything about your products, company and proposition. It has to draw the reader in. Like a 'shop window', it will inevitably be a mix of brand relevancy and desire/need.

**#04
KEEP TYPOGRAPHY CLEAR**

Good typography relays information smoothly and seamlessly. Key areas are font



choice, background (type is harder to read on a coloured background; blocks of type should never be run over pictures or reversed out), line length (short line lengths are easier to read), and coloured type (avoid, except in headings or for impact).

**#05
USE ICONS**

Catalogues rely on their ease of use for success. Icons are a great way to highlight simple, recurring messages throughout. They are best used to reinforce guarantees, service items (delivery, availability, etc), price changes or new products. Well-designed icons become familiar to readers, who respond to them unconsciously. Icons should be explained on page two or, on bigger catalogues, highlighted regularly.

**#06
KEEP COPY BENEFIT LED**

In both B2B and consumer, the purpose of copy is to create a

desire/demand for product. The dialogue and tone have to be appropriate to the target audience and this can be hard to judge. Approach humour with caution and never talk down to your readers. Copy should be benefit led and reinforce features accordingly. For example, colour is not a benefit (unless you are selling camouflage clothing) but strength, performance, ease of use, etc are. And include all the information necessary to complete the purchase - any barrier to completing a sale results in a lost sale.

**#07
MAKE IT EASY TO ORDER**

Order forms are the last chance to market to your customers and they reinforce the purpose of your catalogue - to sell. This is one of the most frequently used pages in your catalogue, so get it wrong and you could lose the sale. Give readers enough space to complete all the details and remember, the

older your audience, the more space they generally need. Include an impulse buy, free gift or offer - it's the last chance to sell to your customer.

**#08
PLAN PROPERLY**

Plan your catalogue carefully with a logical journey through the sections and product groupings. You can afford to take far more risks with return buyers than with prospects. Always start with the products you are best known for at the front of catalogues - this reinforces your proposition very early. Remember, also, that readers start from the back of the catalogue as well as the front - the back cover is a powerful page for offers.

**#09
HAVE CLEAR PHOTOGRAPHY**

Product is king. Style the photography appropriately for your audience and make it very clear what you are selling. With B2B it is often appropriate to pull out smaller shots to show how a product works. With consumer catalogues, don't let a background or models subordinate the product.

**#10
SELL OFF THE PAGE**

It sounds obvious but selling off the page is often misunderstood. It is not just a matter of shouting, "Buy me!" at every opportunity - you have to create desire and expectation. Products must be placed in a marketing context and the reader given the opportunity and information to make the purchase. Don't put barriers between the sale and order placement. Make it very clear what your customers have to do. ●

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