



Catalog Copy

Catalogs are different than most advertising mediums because you're explaining numerous products with short descriptions. Your purpose in writing catalog copy is to get people to order your product directly by calling customer service or filling out an enclosed order form.

Writing for catalogs is an art form of sorts. Use the following catalog DOs and DON'Ts and you'll be on your way to painting a Picasso!

DO Write a Catchy Headline

No matter what your space constraints, do write a snappy headline. Even a couple of words will do.

DON'T Write a Product Description in Your Headline

Be creative in your headline process. If you're selling a diet pill, don't use DIET PILL as your headline. How about "Lose Weight Fast!"

DO Include a "Letter from the Manufacturer"

Flip through your favorite catalogs and you'll probably notice a letter from the company's president (usually located on one of the pages in the front). The letter explains the company's quality of products, the company's commitment to customers as well as the company's customer satisfaction guarantee. Sometimes the letter may even be used to call attention to a specific product line.

A personal letter from the president adds a friendly touch that gives customers that warm, fuzzy feeling. Letting them know there's actually a human being behind the company can make a big selling difference.

DO Give the Facts

Just the facts ma'am, as they say. You're ultimate goal is to get customers to buy from your catalog. So your catalog descriptions have to be as complete as possible.

From sizes to colors, materials to exact specifications - the copy should still be brief but contain enough essentials that the potential customer isn't left to wonder whether she wants to buy it. By the end of the copy block, they should have enough information to make a buying decision.

DON'T Chop Your Pages into Equal Parts

Got a bestselling product? Give it more space than those that don't sell as much.

Try a half page or a full page close to the front of the catalog. Your lesser-selling items can be placed toward the back.

Do Use Your Sales Techniques

Use those selling tools! Credit card orders accepted. Free gift for placing an order. Discounts on large orders. Free shipping on orders over \$50. Gift packaging available.

DON'T Bury Your Phone Number

Ever found a catalog product you wanted to buy and then you flipped here for the number and there to read the item number? Annoying, isn't it?

Consider putting your phone number on every page. No, people won't call and tell you what a wonderful idea you had. But the convenience and ease of ordering will still stick in your customer's mind.

DON'T Forget the Discounts

Your product is 20 percent off. So tell your customer. There are a couple of different ways to do this.

One is to simply write: 20% Off! Was \$84.99 - Now Just \$67.99! Or you can just use graphics to cross out the old price and type the new price.

DON'T Forget Your Graphics

So you've got your product pictures and your catalog copy. Don't forget to use those handy, dandy graphics.

New product? Use a starburst graphic and it will really stand out.

Really draw attention to your items that are on sale, bestsellers, etc. But use special graphics in moderation. If everything has a starburst or an arrow, then nothing will stand out and your page will look cluttered.

DO Give Your Customer Some Space

Keep it simple. Design an order form that's easy to fill out and with a lot of space to write their information.

DON'T Forget the Instructions

Print step-by-step instructions on your order form so your customers know exactly how to send in their order.

And speaking of sending in their order, provide a business reply envelope so your customer can enclose your order form and their check.

Unfortunately - for customers - most catalogs fail to use the above fundamentals. Those catalogs that lack descriptive, persuasive copy and are just filled with product specs and model numbers are not only boring, they're ineffective.

But fortunately - for you - you know how to organize an order-pulling, money-making catalog by utilizing all of these key ingredients.