

## Tag Lines: Your mission in ten words or less.

A really great tagline conveys a company's benefit with personality and attitude and the most memorable taglines connect on an emotional level.

In the 1950s, ad agencies called them "slogans." You may have heard them referred to as a catchphrase, marketing line, or even trademark line, but these days, the standard term is tagline (or "tag line" written as two words). Despite the terminology, we're still talking about a short phrase that tells your audience what you offer.

### What Makes them Tick & What Makes Them Stick

Many famous taglines are basically an evocative, inspiring call to action:

- Just Do It
- Think Different
- Reach out and touch someone
- Put a Tiger in Your Tank

Tagline writers use about ten standard methods for concepting tagline ideas. To launch a brainstorming session, the following five are a good start. Note the example next to each method, and see if you can remember the company for each tagline.

1. Link a product feature with an abstract need: *A Diamond is Forever.*
2. Make a promise: *The World on Time.*
3. Single words (always good in threes) as benefits: *Soothes. Cleanses. Refreshes.*
4. Suggest risk of not using product: *Because So Much is Riding on your Tires.*
5. Tie tagline to logo: *Get a Piece of the Rock.*

### Taglines as Brand Builders

Taglines are the first step and an integral part of brand building. Their value builds for years, and over time, a good tagline can be your best and least expensive form of advertising. If your company name, logo and tagline are all working together as they should, they become an ad in and of themselves.

No matter what your company does, your tagline creates a first impression. People will remember a tag phrase even before a company name. Having years of equity built up in an old tagline can work for or against you. Is the phrase you're using "dated?" Are people tired of hearing it - or worse, no longer believing the claim?

A tagline older than 25 years is usually a sign that your company identity needs reinvigorating. It's never too late to change a dull, tired, non-communicating tagline. Even the biggest brands with famous taglines change their slogan every few years. Most people remember when Coke was "The Real Thing," but look at all the other taglines they've used over a period of 20 years:

- 1970: It's the real thing.
- 1971: I'd like to buy the world a Coke.
- 1976: Coke adds life.
- 1979: Have a Coke and a Smile.
- 1990: Can't Beat the Real Thing.

### **Prime Opportunity: Taglines for Web Content**

For some strange reason, few websites have taglines. This is a shame because those companies (and individuals) are missing out on a prime opportunity.

Any company with a website should make sure to have their logo and tagline on every page; it counts as "an impression" each time a viewer sees it, and when a potential customer prints out a single page from your site, you want your company identity on it.

Few designers or webmasters realize that taglines create a first impression and communicate just as much -- if not more -- than a fancy home page.

### **Tagline Prices & Costs**

A small company can get a quality tagline for the same money as a large company: copywriters charge anywhere from \$250 to \$3,000 to create a tagline. The only reason large companies usually have snappier taglines is that they're the ones who contact professional copywriters rather than trying to "do it themselves."

Large companies also realize that the creation of a great tagline should be considered the first ad a company does, and ideally, done in conjunction with naming and logo design.

A logo designer and copywriter should work together on this identity package; in my 14 years as "the Tagqueen" I've found the result is always better and it gives the company a stronger, more cohesive start.

### **How Smart is Your Tagline?**

The best taglines separate you from your competition, express your personality and add to your branding and marketing campaign. A tagline should tell not only what your company does; it should also make it clear how you are unique compared to your competition.

Assess your current tagline by asking yourself three questions:

1. If you left your business card somewhere, could someone glance at it and know exactly what your company does?
2. Would your tagline work if your competitors used it?
3. Does your tagline focus more on your company or your audience?

A smart tagline includes your unique selling proposition. What do you do best? Why should anyone besides your mother care? Say it in the tagline -- especially if your business name doesn't make it crystal clear what you do.

### **It's Never Too Late to Improve**

A bad tag is worse than none at all; it can actually repel the very people you want to attract - especially if there's an exclamation point after it. This is the mark that tells consumers to RUN AWAY! You might as well put on a bad suit and sell cars if you're going to paste an exclamation point on the end of a company slogan.

Look at the difference between the quiet, yet serious command "Just do it" compared with the overly-perky, golly-gee sound of "Just Do it!" If Avis had said, "We try harder!" the tone would sound suspiciously salesy rather than conveying the serious and sincere statement of "We try harder."

Can you think of a single tagline that is truly improved by adding an exclamation point to it? If you can, please let me know. I'm still looking for the exception to that rule.

Taglines can create an entirely new perception in people's minds and give an old company a new persona and public image. That's a big job for a few words.

Make sure you make them count.

# Tips for developing an “Effective” brochure/Newsletter

The first step to creating an effective brochure begins with the planning. These five essentials show you exactly what you need to do before writing the first word of your brochure:

## 1. Understand your customer.

Before you spend any time planning a brochure, make sure you understand your customer.

- Why would they want to buy (participate, donate, volunteer)?
- What's the most important thing it can do for them? What is the thought (decision-making) process they go through?
- What is the most important problem your product (program) or service can solve for them?

If you don't know the answers to questions, go ask. Talk to your staff. Talk to your customers (volunteers, donors, program participants). Use their answers to help decide which benefits to play up in your brochure.

## 2. Be clear about the goal(s)/objective(s) for the brochure: Donations? Volunteer recruitment? Etc.

## 3. Plan your brochure for AIDA.

- Attention: Use Headlines and graphics your audience cares about.** The average reader takes less than 5 seconds to glance at the cover of a brochure and decide whether or not to read it. If your headline or graphics on the cover of your brochure are boring, few recipients will bother opening it
- Interest:** Use your knowledge of your customer(s) to talk about what “they” are interested in.
- Desire:** Heighten their desire by emphasizing the benefits they receive.
- Action:** Tell them what you want them to do and give them a reason to act now. Be specific!

## 4. Make it easy to respond: Offer multiple methods for responding/engaging, email, phone, web site, etc.

## 5 Tips for Writing Nonprofit Marketing Copy That Works

### 1. **Be reader-centered, not writer-centered.**

Many brochures, websites, and direct mail I see from nonprofits is focused on how great their services, products and organizations are. Hello? Audience, anyone? Consider your reader thinking, "What's in it for me?" If you can, talk with some of your current donors, volunteers, members and clients and ask them 1) why they chose you, and 2) what they get out of your product, service or giving.

HINT: To instantly make your copy more reader-focused, insert the word "you" often.

### 2. **Focus on the benefits – not just the features.**

The fact that your program, service or giving and volunteer opportunities offer a lot of neat features is great, but describing these features is not enough. Focus on benefits – what the features do for your audience.

Let's say your organization provides health services to the uninsured and to Medicaid and Medicare patients. Feature/ benefit sets to incorporate into marketing materials might include:

Feature: Access to healthcare services for everyone.

Benefit: You'll be healthier, feel better and have more energy. As a result, you'll miss less time from work and family responsibilities.

Feature: Appointment times guaranteed within 15 minutes.

Benefit: You have to take off less time from work and can accurately predict when you'll return.

Feature: Medical staff is skilled in environmental health problems in the local community.

Benefit: Peace of mind. You can rely on the medical team's skill in diagnosing and treating health issues that are unique to your community.

### 3. **Draw audiences in with a whammo headline.**

The first line your reader sees means the difference between success and failure. Today's promotions are typically clever headlines that play on words. They're cute, but most of them aren't effective. There are many ways to get attention with a headline, but it's safest to appeal to your reader's interests and concerns. And again, remember to make it reader centered. That's what counts.

Blah: "Nonprofit Leadership Center Offers Unique New Accounting Training Program."

Better: "Turn Your Nonprofit's Finances Around in 60 Days!"

### 4. **Use engaging subheads.**

Like mini-headlines, subheads help readers quickly understand your main points by making copy "skimmable." Read through your copy for your main promotional points, then summarize those ideas as subheads. To make your subheads engaging, it's important to include action or sales elements.

Bad: "Our Organization's Success Stories."

Better: "Meet Three Clients Who Won Their Legal Battles With Our Help."

5. **Be conversational.**

Write to your audiences like you talk to them. Don't be afraid of using conversational phrases such as "So what's next?" or "Here's how you can join today." Avoid formality and use short, simple words. Why? Even if you think your copy can't be misunderstood, a few people won't get it or take the time to decipher it.

6. **Unique format.**

Who says a brochure has to be A4? Selling sandwiches? You can design a brochure in the shape of a sandwich. Season tickets to soccer matches? Design it in the shape of a soccer ball. Using your imagination when designing your brochure can produce better than average results. According to Direct Magazine, a recent mailing by CSi, a company that conducts customer satisfaction surveys for automobile insurance firms and repair shops, got a 15% response rate with a brochure delivered in a 32-ounce squeeze sport water bottle. The headline read, "Thirsty for more repair orders?" Try tall and slim, square, oblong. Whatever you like. *The only limitation is your imagination, and, of course, your budget*

# Marketing Budget

## The Percentage Approach

- This approach is favored by those who believe that marketing and communications expenditures should directly reflect a nonprofit's evolution and the size of its budget. Personally, this is the approach I prefer. The advantage of developing a budget based on your organizational finances is that it's organic. Communications spending grows as does your organization. Of course exceptions are made for special needs such as the launch of a new program, introducing new leadership, or tackling an urgent advocacy campaign.

The average allocation is from 9-12% of your annual organizational budget (start with 10%). Advocacy organizations tend to allocate a higher percentage (12% or higher) of their organizational budgets to communications, since much of their advocacy work is communications based.

Here's a highly-simplified example of a budget shaped by the percentage approach:

2%	Purchasing all advertising and promotion media, including newspaper, radio, TV, and direct mail (postage).
+	
4%	Producing (design, artwork) and printing all communications. This includes newsletters, brochures, web sites, press kits, etc.
+	
1.5%	Producing special events.
+	
3.5%	Salaries, consultants and freelancers.
=	
11%	Total percentage of the organizational budget going to marketing and communications.