

American Writers & Artists Inc. *presents*

Monthly Copywriting Genius



[Home](#) [This Month's Introduction](#) [This Month's Interview](#) [This Month's Analysis](#) [Previous Issues](#)

Monthly Copywriting Genius: Issue #37

How to Build Credibility and Trust in Your Promotion by Simply Giving Away Too Much Information

Dear Monthly Copywriting Genius,

This month's issue is different. And if staff members Helen Buttery and Susan Clark have anything to say about it, you'll see changes like this more often.

So, what's new? Well, we're giving you the inside scoop on how a copywriter and graphic artist team up to produce successful controls.

That's why, in the Q&A section, you'll see we talk with monthly copywriting genius Kim Krause Schwalm and graphic artist Lori Haller.

Both have been in direct marketing for over 15 years. And just as a recording artist decorates his home with gold records, Kim and Lori have quite a number of controls to show off.

The promotion we highlight in MCG this month is for the *Women's Health Letter*. When tested against the old control, Kim's letter produced a 50% lift in response. I can tell you from my own experience that a package that increases response by that much allows you to mail more often and in larger quantities. It definitely supercharges your mail plans.

What's equally amazing is that it's been the control for a long time. What's Kim and Lori's secret? Let's find out.

A Marketing Guru Is Born

Kim started her direct marketing career not as a copywriter, but as a marketer. First, she worked for BlueCross, BlueShield in a tiny two-man shop. As Kim explains, "The department was so small it was just me and the marketing director. But I got a chance to wear a lot of different hats. That's also where I got a chance to write my first direct mail sales letter."

But soon, bigger and better opportunities came her way. Kim left the company to work for Phillips Publishing, one of the biggest newsletter publishers in the country. Kim was hired to launch what the company referred to as "special products." That involved finding products that could be sold to the 300,000 plus readers of their health newsletter. But the job soon evolved into launching the company's health supplement business.

With the help of two other people, Kim got the vitamin line up in about four or five months. They did all the copy in-house, and Kim wrote many of the sales letters herself.

As the division grew, Kim hired more people, but she was always wearing her other marketing hats well. Because of the success she had with the supplements, Kim got an opportunity to work as a publisher for Phillips.

As Kim tells us, "That gave me the chance to work with some of the top copywriters, such as Paris Lampropoulos, Kent Komae, and Doug D'Anna."

Feet First Jump into Freelance Copywriting

Now, some of the more attractive benefits of being a copywriter are setting your own schedule, working from wherever you want and - of course - making a lot of money. Those are also the attributes that attracted Kim to copywriting.

So Kim decided it was time to give that lifestyle a go. Only a few months back from maternity leave, she took the leap into freelance copywriting.

How did she get clients? Well, the thing about being in direct marketing is that you build a big base of contacts. I call it "the golden Rolodex®" and if you haven't started one, now is the time to do so.

Kim's first client came from her network of contacts. She hooked up with a health supplement company that signed her on under a retainer agreement. Ninety percent of Kim's income was from this company, even though the projects only consumed 50% of her time.

From there, Kim's client base grew, and her freelance copywriting career was well cemented. Kim is now a highly sought-after copywriter. She's booked up with projects a year in advance.

While that's sad news for companies who'd like to use her talents, it means her copywriting lifestyle is right on track.

A Promotion Worth Your Reading Time

You can learn more about Kim's career path - and that of Lori Haller, as well - in the pages of this month's MCG. But, for now, let me tell you about Kim's control - one that's definitely worth your reading time.

As I mentioned earlier, Kim's promotion produced a 50% lift in response. When I read through it, I could see why.

Around page five, I was so hooked on the product she was selling, I was ready to buy right then and there. I didn't care that there were at least 15 more pages to read. I was convinced beyond a doubt I needed this product.

Kim's copy is powerful writing. What she does in the first few pages of this letter is provide so much information, that any doubt or skepticism the reader might have is completely removed. But it's also the way she does it that is inspiring.

When I asked Kim to describe her style, she responded, "I write copy that reads easily. I keep the reader moving through the copy. It's like I'm sitting at the table with you having coffee and we are having a conversation. I keep that conversational tone, but without talking down to people."

Lori agreed. She explained that, when it comes to designing the promotion, working with copy that is easy to read actually helps enhance the design. As Lori explains, "The way she writes the copy really helps to make the piece come together. But, also, Kim comes to the table with such a strong vision."

Kim's Secret of Success

One of the secrets of Kim's success is that while she is doing research for the product, she looks for what I call "shockers."

A shocker is a piece of information that makes your jaw drop. It's so shocking that you simply must know more about it. Shockers almost always translate into good copy.

Here's how Kim describes a shocker: "For example, I have a control for a cholesterol-lowering product, Policosanol. On one particular website, they had an evaluation of cholesterol supplements, and found that some of them had as little as four percent of labeled potency actually in the formula... Just learning that information was a real shocker. I wanted to

more about it. When you get something like that, then you know you've got the germ of an idea for your promotion.”

The shocker for the *Women's Health Letter* control was that too much calcium can actually cause more health problems than it solves. That's contrary to what the mass media pushes. When the reader learns the truth, and what the solution is, that's when Kim hooks them into wanting the product.

Lori made sure that when the reader got to that revelation, it stood out prominently on the page. Lori is able to accomplish this because she gets intimately involved in the copy.

So Lori's designs are a reflection of reading the copy in the same way a prospect does. But she also knows how to keep the reader moving through the copy up to the moment of sale.

While she loves design, Lori is also a marketer at heart. And it's their blend of experience and teamwork that has allowed Kim and Lori to produce control after control.

You can learn more about their secrets in this month's issue. Make sure you read Kim's letter. You'll see why she is such a gifted copywriter. Please study this letter and see if you can imitate her style. If you can, you're going to see a dramatic difference in your writing and ultimately an increase in success.

Until next month,

Sandy Franks



Editor, Monthly Copywriting Genius

P.S. When you read the headline on Kim's letter, see if you can identify which of the Four U's are present. I asked Kim to do this, and you'll be surprised by her answer.

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[Home](#) [This Month's Introduction](#) [This Month's Interview](#) [This Month's Analysis](#) [Previous Issues](#)

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