

I've found your wallet!

At last I've found it! I've found the perfect medium for those tantalising 'messages that so many direct mail copywriters and clients insist on using on outer envelopes'. **And it ain't on the outside of envelopes either.**

For years I've hated messages on the outside of envelopes. Clients get visibly upset when I tell them this little secret of mine. Colleagues in the industry get emotionally disturbed at my appalling lack of judgement on this matter and gently point out that not only am I shooting the copywriters trade in the foot, but I'm letting the direct marketing industry down. **Badly!**

You know the kind of messages I mean... '**Now you can learn how to be a leader the Extrofram way!**' Or '**Why waste time when you can save money with Upedvob!**' All, in my view, rivetingly boring! Worst still, before I even open the envelope they scream '**JUNK MAIL**' at me.

Many year's ago my good friend **Drayton Bird** gently took me to task for my heretical views on outer envelope messages. And in his utterly charming way, pointed out that I was shooting the message when I should be shooting the messenger. The problem, as Drayton correctly pointed out, was not so much the concept of printing messages on the outside of envelopes but a widespread lack of understanding of what is the actual purpose of putting a message on the outside of an envelope. **What's it meant to achieve?**

And the answer, of course, is that it's meant to mould the recipients into an appropriate frame of mind before they start reading the contents of the envelope.

Have another look at those two examples I've given above and you'll quickly see that before you ever open these envelopes you're tactically admitting that you're either a '**time-waster**' or a humble '**follower**'. And who on earth wants to admit this?

Of course there are some fabulous success stories with outer envelope messages, including those all-time greats... '***Do you close the door of the bathroom when you are alone in the house?***' ... or ... '***How much do you tip the waiter when you're planning to steal the ashtray?***'

But these are exceptions rather than the rule. That's why I tend to advise clients not to put messages on the outside of envelopes unless they have an exceptionally good message in mind. And even then, I'm not really convinced that the 'pro's' of having a good message outweigh the 'con's' of people taking one look at an envelope bearing a message and saying to themselves '**Junk Mail**'.

But now I've found it! I've found the perfect medium for those tantalising outer envelope messages and it's E-Mail! What's more, I've seen how it works on e-mail and, boy does it work well if you can get it right! And if you don't believe me, where have you been hiding when the ***I Love You*** bug hit the world big time?

As someone who is the recipient of large quantities of junk e-mail (Spam it's called) I have become fascinated with the titles, or header text, used in e-mail messages. Because if you can correctly pitch this one-line header to your target group you can turn targeted e-mails into one of the cheapest and most successful direct marketing medium of all.

And whereas the extraordinary rapid spread of the Love Bug proves that spam can even work in places like The House of Commons and suchlike, we mustn't lose sight of the fact that most of the people who got infected by the Love Bug thought that they were opening e-mail from personal friends and other sources that were known to them.

And therein lies your secret of success. Forget spam. It's disgusting anyway! But just think how the combination of a carefully - ever so carefully - targeting e-mail campaign, coupled with a very - very - cleverly written header can work for you.

For example, if I were at the fabulous **Chris Daffy** Conference (which I was) jointly run by **Marc Cassin** and his team in **DMA** and the **IMI**, and I received an e-mail the following day with a header ... *'I found your wallet at the Chris Daffy conference yesterday'*.

Would I read it? You bet I would, even though, deep down, I know I haven't lost my wallet. I'd open it not only because the header has caught my attention, but because I know I was at the Chris Daffy conference yesterday and therefore this e-mail is not spam.

But if I got an envelope in the post with the message "I found your wallet at the Chris Daffy conference yesterday" flawlessly printed on it... *it just wouldn't be the same, would it?*

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... the forgotten toy – from the underfoot series –
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