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**PENULISAN *ADVERTORIAL* UNTUK *DIRECT MAIL***

Dosen

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**ADVERTORIAL FOR DIRECT MAIL**

There are a number of factors that account for direct mail’s popularity as an advertising medium.

**First**, you can measure the results by counting how many order forms or reply cards come back. With print ads and broadcast commercials you usually don’t know how effective your efforts have been. But direct-mail advertisers always know whether a mailing is profitable or not.

**Second**, direct mail can be targeted to select groups of prospects through the careful selection of the proper mailing lists. The copy for each mailing can be tailored to the needs of the various groups of prospects you want to reach. And, you can send as few—or as many—mailing pieces as your budget allows. Which makes direct mail cost-effective for both big corporations and smaller advertisers alike.

**Third**, direct mail gives you great flexibility in your presentation. Print advertising is limited by the size of the page, broadcast by the length of the commercial. Direct-mail writers can use as many words and pictures as it takes to make the sale. (a direct-mail piece that featured a 16-page sales letter!) Your mailing can even include a sample of the product or a gift for the reader.

Because of these advantages, many advertisers **use direct mail for a wide variety of applications**:

1. To sell products by mail
2. To generate sales leads
3. To answer product inquiries
4. To distribute catalogs, newsletters, and other sales literature
5. To motivate the sales force
6. To keep in touch with former customers
7. To get more business from current customers
8. To follow up inquiries
9. To tie in with other media such as telemarketing, print advertising, and broadcast (Publishers Clearing House, for example, runs TV commercials alerting consumers to look for the Clearing House sweepstakes offer in the mail)
10. To invite prospects to attend seminars, conferences, hospitality suites, and trade show exhibits
11. To renew subscriptions, memberships, service contracts, and insurance policies
12. To get customers to come to the store
13. To distribute information, news, product samples
14. To conduct research surveys
15. To build goodwill
16. To announce a sale

**A PERSONAL MEDIUM**

The main difference between **direct mail and space advertising** is that mail is **a personal medium**. A letter is a one-to-one communication from one human being to another. An ad appearing in a magazine will be seen by thousands or millions of other readers. But a letter is for your eyes only.

Now, it’s true that most direct mail is mass-produced and distributed in bulk mailings to thousands of prospects. Still, the reader views mail as more personal than a magazine or newspaper. The trick is to take advantage of this—by creating direct mail that captures the best characteristics of personal mail.

Unlike an ad, a sales letter is signed. So the writer can use the first person—“I” writing to “you,” the reader—to personalize the sale message. The tone of the letter should also be personal. **Successful direct-mail writers favor an informal, conversational style**. They use contractions, colloquial language, and short, snappy sentences. Their letters brim with personality, enthusiasm, warmth, and sincerity.

Unlike print advertising, which is a new medium for the novice copywriter, direct mail should come easy; we all have experience in letter writing.

But too many direct-mail letters sound like . . . well, like advertising. When you write direct mail, don’t suppress your natural style. Let the words flow in your own voice. Write the direct-mail letter as if you were writing a letter to a friend.

Direct mail is **almost always a response-oriented medium**. It asks for the order (or at least for some type of action) now, not in a day or a week or a month from now. Direct-mail writers need to generate an immediate response from the reader. This is why most direct-mail packages include an order form, a reply envelope, and copy that tells you to “act now—don’t delay—send in your order TODAY!”

As I mentioned, you have great flexibility in the elements you include in your mailing package. As the copywriter, you decide. Should the package contain a letter? A brochure? An order form? A reply card? A sample? A second letter? A second or third brochure?

The “classic” direct-mail package contains an outer envelope, a letter, a brochure, and a reply card. But knowledgeable direct-mail writers vary this format to suit their objectives. Of course, there’s always the option of using a completely different format, such as a self-mailer or an invoice stuffer.

The heart of the package is the sales letter. Most of the selling is done in the letter; the brochure is used to highlight sales points, illustrate the product, and provide technical information not appropriate to a letter. There’s an old saying among direct-mail writers: “The letter sells; the brochuretells.”

This chapter focuses on writing the sales letter and also talk about envelopes and order forms. Brochures are touched on briefly here and covered in more detail in next chapter.

**SALES LETTER MECHANICS**

It’s easy to begin an ad, because they all follow the same format: headline first, visual that illustrates the headline, and lead paragraph that expands on the headline. But the writer has more options with the start of a sales letter.

**First**, there’s the choice of whether to personalize the letter with the individual recipient’s name and address, or send out a form letter.

To personalize, you use a computer to generate customized letters for each person on the mailing list, and that’s expensive. Personalized letters generally get a better response, as long as they look personally typed and sound personal in tone. Don’t overdo it by repeating the person’s name over and over in the letter (“so, MR. RAYMOND, we have reserved this special offer for you and the whole RAYMOND family . . .”). This technique sounds insincere; you wouldn’t use the person’s name that often if you were speaking face to face.

Also, avoid the old-fashioned “ink jet” printing systems that produce letters in which the name is obviously inserted into a form letter. The letter should look as if it were typed by hand; you can achieve this effect with a PC and laser printer.

In most assignments, economy will require that you use preprinted letters. Some advertisers print form letters and then type in each prospect’s name and address (this is the “match and fill” technique). But match and fill is time-consuming, and mailing tests show that match-and-fill letters often don’t pull any better than form letters with headlines running across the top.

There are exceptions. It pays to personalize sales letters going to existing customers, and also when writing to high-level executives. The bigger the corporation and the higher up the corporate ladder the recipient, the more likely personalization is to pay off.

Set the letter headline in large, bold typeface, such as 20-point Arial Black. You can place the headline above the salutation, and as an option, you can center the headline and put it in a box to call attention to it. Such a box is called a Johnson Box.

The body copy of the letter should be set in a typewriter font, not in Times Roman or another PC font, because the direct-mail letter should look like a personal letter, not like an ad or brochure. It recommend Prestige Elite or New Courier for sales letter body copy.

In some letters, you may decide against a headline and simply start with the salutation: Dear Friend, Dear Reader, Dear Business Executive, Dear Friend of the Smithsonian Institute.

A salutation that identifies with the reader’s special interest—Dear Farmer, Dear Lawyer, Dear Computer Enthusiast, Dear Future Millionaire— is always better than Dear Sir, Dear Madame, or Dear Friend.

Sometimes you will use a salutation only. Sometimes, a salutation and a headline. In some cases, a headline without a salutation may be more appropriate.

**15 WAYS TO START YOUR SALES LETTER**

The first sentence of your letter is the most important one. This sentence signals whether there is something of interest in your letter or whether it is worthless junk mail to be thrown away without a second glance. The lead must hook the reader’s attention, but it must also entice him to read further.

Over the years, letter writers have found that there are certain types of openings that are more effective in direct mail than other types. Here are samples of 15 of those leads. When you’re struggling with your first letters, turn to these examples for possible ideas on how to structure your own opening.

1. **State the Offer**

The offer consists of the product for sale, its price, the terms of the sale (including discounts), and the guarantee.

If your offer is particularly attractive, you may make the offer—and not the product or its benefits—the theme of the letter. Here’s how the International Preview Society featured a free ten-day trial offer in a sales letter selling Beethoven CDs:

Yours FREE for 10 days—

the legendary music of Beethoven—

Nine Symphonies that epitomize the beauty and harmony denied him in life.

Plus FREE Preview bonus.

Dear Music Lover,

Beethoven. The name alone calls to mind some of the greatest music of the ages …

The letter writer figured that the reader already appreciated Beethoven, so there was no need to sell her on Beethoven’s symphonies. And it’s hard to sell one set of classical recordings over another based on the orchestra or conductor or the quality of the performance. So, the copywriter concentrated on the offer—a free trial plus a free bonus CD—just for accepting the trial offer.

The headline was typed with an ordinary typewriter font and positioned where the reader’s name and address would normally appear in a personal letter.

1. **Highlight the Free Literature**

Letters that seek to generate inquiries from potential customers usually offer the reader a free brochure, booklet, catalog, or other piece of sales literature. You can increase response by stressing the offer of free literature, and by centering the sales pitch on the benefits of the literature rather than those of the product or service.

Here’s an example from a letter sent to me by The Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York:

Dear Friend:

We have reserved for you a free copy of Prentice-Hall’s TAX-SAVING STRATEGIES , a helpful book for Corporate Executives and Professionals. It contains practical, timely, and useful ways for you to maximize the value of your deductions and save dollars.

1. **Make an Announcement**

If you have something new to announce—a special offer, a new product, a new club, a one-of-a-kind event—start your letter with this important news.

From the publishers of Encyclopedia Britannica:

Now . . . we’ve overcome the last reason for not owning The New Encyclopedia Britannica.

Money.

Dear Friend:

If money were no object, would you own Britannica 3? Of course. Most people would. Well, now I’m happy to say that you can acquire Britannica 3 for far less than you thought possible. You can do so . . . direct from the publisher . . . at a substantial Group Discount.

Another example, this one a letter from Calhoun’s Collectors Society:

In the world of U.S. stamps, there is only one name older than that of the Federal Bureau of Engraving and Printing itself. The revered house of Scott—known since 1863 as the ultimate authority on American philately.

Now, for the first time ever, Scott’s stamp experts have selected the subjects to be commemorated in a limited philatelic edition that is unprecedented in collecting annals.

1. **Tell a Story**

Copy written in story format has great reader appeal. First, it creates empathy with the reader. By telling a story that relates to the reader’s own situation, you build a bridge between the reader’s needs and your sales pitch. Second, people are familiar with stories and enjoy reading them. The news they get from newspapers, magazines, and television is related to them in narrative form. Stories hold their interest and get them to read letters they might otherwise put aside.

A subscription letter for INC. magazine begins with the story of a man who quit his job to become an entrepreneur—a move many of us with corporate positions daydream of now and then:

Dear Executive,

Three years ago this month, a man I know—he was then a vice president of a big corporation in Illinois—walked into his boss’s office and handed in his resignation.

Two weeks later, he started his own company. The man had everything going for him. He was smart, he was energetic, he was dedicated, and he knew his particular field inside out.

Almost from the start, the new company caught on. It grew quickly, adding new customers, new employees, new equipment. But then, about a year ago, the picture began to change. Orders were still coming in, but the company was stumbling. Things went steadily from bad to worse until . . .

A week ago Friday, that man—who had started out on his own with such high hopes just three years before—was forced to go out of business. His company closed its doors for good.

What happened? What went wrong? Could it have been avoided? How? . . .

This story holds our attention because it could happen to us someday. We want to know what went wrong and how INC. magazine can help us avoid the same mistakes.

1. **Flatter the Reader**

One reason many people take a negative view toward direct mail is that they know it isn’t really personal. They know they are just one of thousands of people whose names the advertiser obtained from a mailing list.

But you can turn this fact to your advantage by using flattery. Tell the reader, “Yes, I got your name from a list. Yes, you’re part of that group. But that group is special; the people in it have superior characteristics that set them apart from the crowd. And you’re superior, too. That’s why I’m writing to you.”

There is flattery in the opening of a letter from the Maserati Import Company, a seller of luxury automobiles:

Dear Mr. McCoy:

One of a kind. Is that phrase a little trite?

I used to think so until I tried to find you.

Now I know what “one of a kind” really means.

The process of finding your name and address was the advertising equivalent of panning for gold. . . .

The letter goes on to offer the reader a free bottle of French champagne if he will test drive a Maserati luxury sedan.

1. **Write to the Reader Peer-to-Peer**

The logic here is that people in special-interest groups—and most direct mail is aimed at narrow groups of prospects—will be more receptive to a sales pitch from a peer than from an outsider.

So, a letter aimed at farmers should be signed by a farmer. And it should be written in the plain, straightforward language of one farmer talking to another.

With this approach, the writer can achieve empathy with the reader by saying, “Look . . . I am like you. I know your problems. I’ve been through them myself. And I’ve found a solution. You can trust me.”

In a subscription letter for Writer’s Digest, the pitch is made by one writer talking to other writers:

Dear Writer:

I don’t have the great American novel in me.

I flunked Poetry 102 in college. My first, last, and only short story was rejected by 14 magazines. . . .

1. **A Personal Message from the President**

In direct mail, the owner or manager of a business can talk directly with his or her customers. Customers like dealing with the person in charge. When the top person in your company signs the letter, it makes the reader feel important. And having the owner’s signature on the advertising adds a bit more credibility to the message. (I’ve often heard people say of such mail, “Well, he wouldn’t sign it if it wasn’t true.”)

FutureSoft begins a brochure on its Quickpro software package with a letter from the company president:

Personal Message to Microcomputer Owners from Joseph W. Tamargo, President of FUTURE-SOFT …

I want to tell you why I have chosen to send you an actual condensation of the Operating Instructions of our exciting and unique QUICKPRO, which writes programs for you.

Another example, this one from John L. Blair, president of the New Process Company, a mail-order clothing manufacturer:

Dear Mr. Bly:

A memo recently crossed my desk that said I would have to RAISE MY PRICES—NOW—to offset our spiraling operating costs! But I said, “NO! NOT YET!”

I know that customers like you, Mr. Bly, expect the BEST VALUE for their money when they shop at NPC. And that’s why I’m going to hold the line on higher prices just as long as I possibly can! …

1. Use a Provocative Quote

The quote should contain news, a startling statistic or fact, or say something outrageous. The quote must be like the lead of a news story—it must raise a question or arouse curiosity to make the reader want to read the body of the letter to find out more.

In a letter selling a new book on advertising, Prentice-Hall began with a quotation taken directly from the book itself:

Advertising agencies and other consultants score something on the order of a 9 on my Least-Needed scale of 1-to-10 …

This is what Lewis Kornfeld has to say, based on his extraordinary success as Radio Shack’s master marketer for over 30 years.