

# Tell the Truth – and Nothing But the Truth

Some years ago a British real-estate chain decided to go the totally reverse way when selling houses and apartments. We all know the usual real-estate jargon using words like breathtaking, stunning and exquisite in every sentence when describing even the most miserable apartment using sentences like: “This stunning apartment, presenting an exclusive panorama view of a breathtaking backyard in the central city is a must see...”

The interesting fact is that we all know the description hardly reflected the reality but only some real estates fascinating writing talent. Well this real-estate agency went the totally opposite way by describing the reality as it was ... yes you read it right – as it is!

Gone were the clichés replaced with realistic snapshots of the real apartments of houses of the streets of London. “This bump of a house needs more than love to turn it into something anyone can live in. The hall is less attractive than the worst you possible can imagine in Bangladesh – the walls are flooded with water and the floors are hardly

visible due to the dirt spread across the whole house.”

Yes this was in fact the way the ads looked like. Would you dare this strategy? The real-estate chain did – and the success was enormous – suddenly people actually began reading the ads, they were in fact so motivated by this new writing style that people were looking forward to read the ads, sometime as good entertainment but in most cases as they were real and honest. Words which few real estate agents have learned about (if you happened to be a real-estate agent – sorry for offending you – you are naturally excepted). But the most interesting fact from this campaigning was that the sales increased, the real estate agents in fact loved it, as they didn't have to lie and pretend something, which wasn't there. The customers loved it as they were not wasting their time and the clients loved it, as the people visiting the properties were real customers – not customers lured to visit the property because of some fancy copywriters talent.

I receive about 500 spam emails a day in my public

email address inbox – most of the headlines are lies – trying to attract my attention – and every time I or my assistants are lied to – to secure our attention – it downgrades our perception of the sender. No need to say that more and more emails are lying to attract attention – most likely 80 percent does!

But no brand has failed so far by being honest – I'm not asking you to down sell your proposition – but to be terrifyingly honest – tell it like it is – and to add it with a twist of humour when relevant and required.

Do you know what – it builds trust. It actually makes people believe you if not everything you tell people is picture perfect – but realistic. Tell it like it is. Tell the consumer if the battery time in your cell phone is 2 hours – and don't say 3. If the delivery time is 14 days don't say 10 days. If you come back with more information within 24 hours – do it – or else tell the customer the realistic truth.



I'd rather downgrade the consumers expectation – and make them positive surprised than disappoint them – and make them enemy of my brand for life. The Internet has become a media for lies – just like the real-estate industry and the used-cars salesmen. If you intend to differentiate your brand from the rest of the online content – stick to the honest truth – I promise you – you will never regret it.

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