

# The AIDA Formula For Copywriting

By Jerry Bullard

Author Red Smith once described the process of writing by saying, "There's nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and open a vein." Fortunately the art of copywriting has some creative alternatives.

One of the most successful techniques for writing copy that gets results is known as the A.I.D.A. formula. Simply put, A.I.D.A. stands for, "*Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action.*" That's all there is to it. Yet when followed sequentially, those four words are the building blocks of most print advertising today.

Let's see how it works.

First we have the '*Attention*' segment. Here is where you write to hook the potential customer with an attention grabbing opening. It could be serious, humorous, factual, playful, historical, or whatever. The point is for the customer to stop, have their curiosity aroused long enough to put down that cup of coffee, and to take a look at – or listen to -- your offering. Don't forget that the average person is barraged with around 3,000 messages per day from various sources. Your goal here is to create something that is unique and will pique customer or client's curiosity and get them to continue reading.

The next item on our list is '*Interest.*' It should be organic - a natural, seamless, segue from Attention to Interest. An expansion if you will. At this particular point you'll give some sort of payoff for following your Attention lead. Introduce the product or service here. Then, you'll use your words to provide the benefits of ownership. Don't forget to differentiate between features and benefits. Your reader wants to know about the benefits and how they will affect him or her.

So, what's the difference between a feature and a benefit? Let's take a large screen TV as an example. A 55 inch screen is a feature for a big screen TV. That's all well and good, but how does it relate to your customer? Being able to watch your favorite DVD's together with the family in the comfort of your home and see the action on a huge screen ... now that's a benefit for your customer. Notice the difference?

Now comes the '*Desire*' element of the AIDA formula. Now that you have the customer's attention and interest, you now create an emotional element of desire. A sense of the customer saying, "I gotta' have this and have it now." Here you'll build upon the benefits you wrote about earlier or use a new benefit entirely. The Interest and Desire sections often complement each other. Don't be thrown by this. Use your words to paint a picture of the customer enjoying the product or benefiting from ownership or using your particular service. Just be sure to remember, the focus of your writing is always about the customer's desires, wants, and needs - not yours.

Next we wrap up the business by using the 'Action' part of the formula. After all this, you want the customer to take some sort of action. Whether it's calling a toll free number for more information, checking out a website, going to the store, placing an order with a salesperson, or clipping a coupon, these are all calls to action. Don't lose out by not asking for the business.

Now, let's see how A.I.D.A. would work in a test case...

**Attention:** Can't Afford A New Car Right Now? You're not alone!

**Interest:** Dan's Auto Repair Service is here to help. Why go for a new car when we can update your current one just like new? (Benefit)

**Desire:** (Benefit) Imagine the savings you can pocket by having your present car completely refinished!

**Action:** Head down to Dan's Auto Repair today and stop in for a free estimate.

So there you have the basics of the AIDA formula used in copywriting. Follow it and watch the new results of your copy.

Jerry Bullard is an award winning freelance business & marketing copywriter with over 13 years experience. He helps companies create their marketing messages more persuasively. His business projects have been seen in print, audio/video, TV, and the Web. He is also a published writer who has contributed business articles and press releases to local and regional publications. He is editor of "Jerry's Marketing Roundup," a free monthly newsletter available at his website. His website is [<http://www.jerrybullard.com>]