

## Chanimal Ad Guidelines

### Persuasive Format

For a display ad to generate the most leads, it must be as persuasive as possible and should follow *the persuasive format* (Attention, Credibility, Problem, Solution, Best Solution, Overcome Objections, Visualization and Step to Actuate (close)). Using this format, I was able to increase our response by over 2 times at one company, 35 times at another (leads went from apx. 100 to over 3,500 with the same publications and same budget), and we won an award from one of our publications for “most leads” ever (while a VP of Marketing at GE). I hope these concepts help you have similar success.

Following is an explanation of each of these elements along with examples.

### Attention

The first job of the ad is to get the readers attention and get them to STOP. This is achieved with a) the graphic element, b) headlines and c) the format. As with any good approach, we get attention (interest) when we establish “curiosity.” If we are curious...we will STOP and read more.

Within the ad, I recommend using a graphic and headline on the top third of the page. The **acid test** for the graphic: *It should stand alone and represent the problem we solve, or the greatest benefit we deliver (if the problem is self evident).* The purpose is to get readers to STOP, so we can use humor (a “slight” twist on what is usually expected), a before/after scenario, the results (benefits) of our product, etc. The words NEW (since it is news) and FREE also get attention.

The headline should correlate with the graphic, as above.

The layout should follow the “Z” format so the reader can quickly scan the elements during their brief pause and determine if they want to read more. Once we catch their attention we must give them an overview quickly—which is why we follow this format.

Below are several examples that follow this approach. I’ll refer back to these examples as we cover the other sections.

**Tired of Nursing Your Exchange Server?**

**#1 Best-Seller!**

**Prevent Hiccups**  
GoExchange removes errors, warnings and inconsistencies within the database—before major corruption makes the database fail.  
“GoExchange corrected 2,264 errors and 26 warnings.” Paul Rawen, Director IT

**Run, Don't Crawl**  
In addition to fixing the database, GoExchange removes sluggishness and improves performance by re-indexing and de-fragmenting the database to permanently remove white space and defunct items. The end result is increased performance and stability with a compact efficient database that's 31 to 55% smaller! Combine this with archiving and the database is up to 91% smaller—making it much quicker to backup, restore and more!

**Automated Babysitter**  
Free. GoExchange is easy to setup and use. Twenty minutes—that's all it takes to get your server up and running. Just schedule it, and walk away!

**Fix the Problem**  
You may have tried the four utilities to fix Exchange. While they help, they are too tedious, time consuming and lightweight to keep your Exchange baby healthy. You've tried the milk, now try some meat!

**Pamper Yourself with GoExchange**  
It's time to try GoExchange, from Lucid8, the #1 best-selling automated disaster prevention and optimization software for Microsoft Exchange 5.5, 2000 and 2003. As the mother of all Exchange tools, GoExchange helps prevent disasters, repair problems, improve performance, and saves you a lot of time.

**Without routine maintenance, decreasing performance, increased warnings and errors accumulate and database fragmentation increases, leading to Exchange disasters.** Gartner

**FREE**  
• Free Software for analysis of your Exchange server!  
• Free 24-hour Support—Basic Funding of Your Exchange Server.  
• View the Lucid8 webcast: “Protecting Microsoft Exchange...”  
Go to [www.Lucid8.com/002](http://www.Lucid8.com/002)  
Call 425.456.8477  
E-mail: [Sales@Lucid8.com](mailto:Sales@Lucid8.com)

**GoExchange**  
AUTOMATED MAINTENANCE

**Ad #1.** The ad above shows a man nursing a Microsoft Exchange server (it should have had a bigger bottle and the server dressed in baby clothes—but the deadline was too short to re-work the graphic). The headline reflects the problem. The



**#1 Best-Seller**

# Create COOL apps for Linux!

Finally, an easy way to start programming for Linux, with award-winning CodeWarrior. Use the same IDE used by more than 200,000 programmers and develop the world's next "cool apps" for Linux.

Linux needs you! Linux is one of the world's fastest growing operating systems. The continued success of Linux depends on programmers like you creating

useful, powerful applications. Somebody needs to create the world's next cool apps to keep Linux growing in popularity — it may as well be you!

**Use CodeWarrior; be cool.** Use the industry standard taught at over 1000 schools and universities.

- ✓ The state-of-the-art IDE helps you shorten your development time.
- ✓ CodeWarrior allows you to port existing projects from Windows, Mac OS and Solaris.
- ✓ Everything you need... project management tools, editors, GNU compilers, debuggers, linkers, and assemblers.
- ✓ Extensive support through on-line help in PDF and HTML formats, sample projects, internet and telephone.

Our IDE is powerful, yet easy-to-use.

**CodeWarrior for Linux**

**Cool deal! \$20 Rebate!**

Buy today from your favorite reseller and get a \$20.00 rebate!

- CodeWarrior for Red Hat Linux
- CodeWarrior for SUSE Linux

Download rebate coupon: [http://www.metrowerks.com/usa/\\_rebate](http://www.metrowerks.com/usa/_rebate)

Buy at your favorite reseller: **CompUSA • Fry's Electronics**

**metrowerks** <http://www.metrowerks.com> or call 1-800-377-4416

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**Ad #4.** The ad above shows the “Z”. You can do likewise for each of the examples. It was for their \$99 product (not the \$4k above), hence the \$20 promotional discount.

## Credibility

After we have caught the readers attention, we need to establish credibility to add believability to our message. This is obtained through awards, a “pole” position (#1 best-seller, #1 most-award winning), quotes, our perceived expertise, and how professionally we have presented ourselves (professional doesn’t mean stuffy).

We may also include a short 7-9 word quote (3<sup>rd</sup> person testimonials are irrefutable), add additional awards. We may also have promote the pole position within our vertical category (#1 most-award winning HVAC business management application, etc.).

We typically use a three-column layout with 10 to 12 point type, which increases readability and we have more room to include the desired elements.

The ad does not have to win design awards (we want sales awards), but it can’t look like it was made with MS Publisher in-house, instead of by a professional graphic designer.

## Problem

This is first demonstrated with the graphic and the headlines (either direct or implied). When the problem is evident, we can then bypass the problem and start with the solution. The problem is also mentioned in the body copy.

**All these Mac developers can't be wrong**

**CodeWarrior is the only serious choice for professional Mac development.** Chances are, every Mac program you use was created using CodeWarrior. In fact, more than 97% of all commercial Mac OS applications are built with CodeWarrior.

**Built with the Mac developer in mind.** The CodeWarrior Integrated Development Environment (IDE) has won every major award given to Mac development software. It's the worldwide standard for creating Mac software, and continues to lead the industry.

**Check out these CodeWarrior benefits:**

- ✓ The ease of the all-ITD shortens your development time.
- ✓ Everything you need is one box... project manager, editor, compiler, debugger, linker, assembler... goodness, a file compare utility, our world class framework (PowerPlant), and the flexibility to plug in third-party components.
- ✓ Use the same familiar interface to develop for all the major platforms, including Windows® Linux, Solaris®, game consoles, and embedded platforms.
- ✓ Tightest IEEE/C, C++ standards compliance.
- ✓ C, C++ and Java™ support.

**Go with the world class standard.** Use the same powerful, flexible, but limited that built world-class apps like Adobe® Photoshop® and Microsoft® Windows®.

**See for yourself.** Don't just take our word for it. Get your FREE\* 30-day evaluation edition of CodeWarrior for Mac OS and put it to the test.

**FREE! 30-day Eval**

Discover why over 200,000 programmers worldwide use CodeWarrior.

Call today or order online  
**FREE 30-day evaluation**

**1-800-377-5416**

\*Not available in states not bound by U.S. Copyright laws. See our website for details.

**CodeWarrior for Mac OS**

**Ad #5.** This ad was for a product that already dominated the category with 97% market share. It was to reinforce the pole position and announce a new release—the ad was designed to get upgrades. The company had already paid for the space so we had to fill it with something that would get a response. The graphic is the part I wanted to point out—it shows prospects reaching for the popular product.

I've also used another approach where we showed our strength within a comparative matrix.

## Solution

The solution is ALWAYS our product (period). With software, it is identified by the product package and screen shots (if they are any good—not boring). Even for download products we create a mock up product to turn an “intangible” into a tangible (easier to sell tangible products we can touch). We also explain how our product is the hero within the copy.

Since the package represents the hero, it should be well designed. Please download the follow “The Chanimal Packaging Guidelines” found at the Chanimal site (available once registration – takes 30 seconds). It should have a primary design element that represents the product.

## Best Solution

This is developed within the body copy. The simple format is to state the problem, how our product is the solution, and then give three compelling and well articulated reasons that substantiate and prove it is the BEST solution (without ever actually using the word “solution” (air, water, grease, blood—they're all “solutions” for something—we must articulate *exactly* how we are the best).

For example, if we say “Increases Revenues & Profits.” We must then...**PROVE IT!** “

We also say,

- Increase customer loyalty
- Free up more of your time
- Reduce stress

Now we need to PROVE IT! We should make our claim, back it up, make another claim, back it up, etc. If we can't prove it—we don't say it (it's just puffery and has no place in a persuasive ad). It takes more thought and homework to claim/prove, but it is much more persuasive—which is what we are after so we maximize leads.

## Overcoming Objections

Once we have proven our product can help customers, we must overcome their objections (quickly so we can close). One of the most common objectives is “How does it compare” to whatever they are using, or against other known alternatives. We can go straight to the jugular with a comparative matrix (see the grid below the product picture in Ad #3). We can also use copy like, “unlike others” or list actual product, and then state the difference. With Ad #1, the competition was the alternative--doing the work manually. We overcame this objection with the following copy:

“You can do some of this work yourself, but why waste time doing regular maintenance when Goexchange can do it for you—faster and more effectively than doing it by hand.”

We then validated this claim with a quote, “*Life before Goexchange was an absolute nightmare, late nights, long weekends, and upset users.*”

## Visualization

The last step before the close is to help the prospect see the benefits of using the product—the “graphic” visualization goes on the bottom left corner (it's in the scan path of the Z format), the copy uses the last sentence before the summary and close. This is done through testimonials (see Ad #1), through graphs (see Ad #2), and through screenshots (Ad #3, #4, #5), which help the user visualize using the application.

## Step To Actuate – The Close

We should follow the ABC's (always be closing) throughout the ad and within the special offer—now is not the time to blow it. We need the reader to DO SOMETHING—or else it is not a direct response ad. Following are the actions we want (any will do):

- Get the reader to our website to fill out a form (so we have a LEAD). This is where most of our responses will come from.
- Pick up the phone and call us (so we have a LEAD)
- Send us an e-mail (so we have a LEAD).

We want a LOT of highly qualified, highly interested LEADS! We have to determine what can we offer them in exchange for their contact information. What do we have that they want?

- They want product information if they are still curious
- They want something FREE. They want white papers, reports, best practice examples, resources—knowledge that will help them, regardless of whether or not they buy our product
- Promotions are good. We can use a rebate, give-away-item, bundle, etc.
- We should instill urgency to contact us with an impending event with a limited time or deadline. If they are interested, they may fear missing the promotion and act now.

All of the Ad examples (1-5) above have examples of promotions, time limits and content. Most use the word FREE (since it is the #1 most powerful marketing word (“New” is another)).

If we were able to get someone to read our ad, we must finish the job and get them to act—we cannot leave them flat and *forget to close*. We can provide “information” but it is too passive and not compelling enough to maximize response unless it uses this persuasive format. We need to search our bag of goodies and come up with something of value—so they will go to the website, call us, or send us an e-mail.

Tip: Within the close we need to make sure we put a dash around the offer box. It looks like an offer (the apex of our ad) and increases response rate.

## Misc

Pay special attention to the following bullets and do not let the concise treatment distract from the value of each of these points:

- Ensure we have all the tracking mechanism's in place. A unique URL that goes to a unique primary landing page, then a lead form, then a secondary landing page (Chanimal has examples). Also, a unique phone number (or at least a policy to ask for the source when the prospect calls).
- Corporate Logo. Helps build awareness for the institutional brand.
- Corporate Colors. Part of the brand identity. See suggestion earlier.
- Corporate Layout. Further creates uniform identity. We can use an existing layout from our company "if" it is persuasive. But we should lobby to change this layout if it is not. GE had four ad templates—none of them were persuasive. I was a rebel and ran an ad with my z format template. I got called on it by the branding policy, but they conceded and added a template to the GE standard ads when I proved a MUCH greater response than previous formats.
- We can change the graphic on the top 1/3<sup>rd</sup> to be the product, problem or benefit, but the rest of the layout should get laid out correctly the first time and then the format should lock (see all the ads above).
- Legal Disclaimers. The purpose for these disclaimers is to mitigate risk, not to take up all the room and distract from the ad. Without providing legal advice (my legal disclaimer), I typically put the copyright of the company and products, along with a generic, "All other copyrights are the property of their respective owners." I push back and do not allow my legal to fill the bottom 1/4<sup>th</sup> page with tons of legal disclaimers (poor IBM marketing—legal obviously presides over results (have you ever seen so much print in ads). It may mitigate all risk, but it will also reduce my space and my response—and it is my budget, not theirs.
- You versus Us. Use the word "you" (or variants) instead of we, our, us, mine—especially if we are referring to our company (creates an "us" versus "them/you" mentality). We can use "we" when we want to create an inclusive/team feeling (or do not want to blame "them" for a universal problem). Also, the copy should be personal and conversational—since the reader is alone when they are reading (you are not talking to a group).
- Headlines should sell. Five times as many people read the headlines as the body copy. Promise a benefit, provide news (increases recall). Headlines of ten words sell more than short headlines. Put your headline in quotes to increase recall over 28% (does not have to be attributed). Blind headlines decrease recall 20%. Headlines below the graphic are read 10% more than headlines above.
- Ad size. Two page spreads often cost twice as much—but seldom pull twice the leads. Island ads (surrounded by magazine copy on the top and side) historically pull the same leads as full-page (if you can get your message across within the space)—they also offer great placement if they are surrounded by a relevant article.
- Use time and trusted words. New, FREE, introducing, etc.
- Eyes of people should look at the reader. "Photographs" of a person looking at you helps make readers stop (also works with packaging)—which is the #1 goal of any ad (get the reader to stop and notice). Now you have time to sell.
- Before & After stories help increase sales.
- Story copy. Use stories to draw readers into your copy. Avoid analogies (like) and stay away from superlatives. For example, "we are the best" actually decreases credibility (unless you can "prove it"). Testimonials increase credibility—you can't argue with a user's experience (3<sup>rd</sup> person selling). Celebrity testimonials increase recall—for the celebrity, but often decrease recall for the product.
- Long versus short copy. In split test, long copy invariably outsells short copy—but it better be written well and be compelling enough to pull the reader through. It is better to say a "little" too much, than not enough. If it is not persuasive, not compelling, or confusing, it will not optimize a response.
- Four color. Increases recall almost 100%.
- Readability. If we want prospects to read our ad copy, we have to maximize readability. We should use the following:
  - Sans font headings (catch attention, are designed to stop, and are short)
  - Do not use all CAPS anywhere (headline or body copy)—it reduces readability ("retards reading")
  - Fewer than 60 characters across (including spaces). Best is 3 columns of type, 35 to 45 characters wide.

- Every photograph or screenshot has a caption (we know what the screenshot is, but we are too close to the product. Users don't know what to look for. It is even better if we show a screenshot with call-outs.
- Use a common type face that are the easiest to read (Times Roman, Baskerville, etc.)—this is not the time for the creative director to show his/her stuff.
- Don't hesitate to use "widows" (single lines that split to another column, etc.). They aren't good for an English report, but short lines increase readership
- Text that is arranged in the shape of an image (star, fish, state, etc.) reduces readership
- Use leading (line-spacing) to separate paragraphs (versus indents) and it increases readership 12%
- Do not put periods at the end of headings—it creates a full stop (and we want readers to continue)
- Copy that starts with drop-initials jump-starts the reader (increases readership an avg 13%)
- Minimum 10 point type size
- Serif fonts for body copy (since they are easier to read) – sans for headlines
- Centered text should be limited to two lines
- Non-justified margins
- Paragraphs should contain no more than 6 lines (there are some exceptions when using narrower columns). Short sentences and short paragraphs increase readership (don't confuse it with short vs. long copy).
- Never use reverse text (lighter on dark). The only exception is when the magazine requires that you slug the ad with the word "advertisement" (if it looks too much like an article). In this case, use italic caps, Sans text, in reverse—then nobody can read it ;-)

I highly recommend the book, "[Ogilvy on Advertising](#)" for the internal ad person. Within it we see examples showing the % increase in responses and sales according to each change in each design element (some of these concepts are summarized above—read chapter 7 for more).

I also recommend that you copy whatever is working from other people's ads. Designers often value creativity over copying—even when we have a chance to copy what works best (which should be the starting place—then branch out to see if it can be improved). We should leverage our competition's efforts and follow the "first to be second" rule with product and ads—first, match what is working, then anti-up and make it better. Examples include Lexus, Microsoft (seldom on the "bleeding" edge, but usually wait to see if a market has merit before they dive in), Japanese and Chinese knock-offs (so long as they don't violate the law, their approach is intelligent).

### **Ad Concept Process**

Following is the 10 step process I typically use to create ads (simplified):

1. Determine the target audience (young programmers, advanced IT within Fortune 100 companies, singing teachers, small business with 50 – 200 employees, etc.).
2. Understand the positioning of the product (how is it different)—this is the apex of all strategy and one of the most difficult areas to define. Download the Positioning PowerPoint within Chanimal for more details.
3. Learn the key benefits that resonate with the prospective targets. Have you asked your customers why they purchased?
4. Start copy with a simple outline on a blank page, starting with a) attention, b) credibility, c) problem, d) solution, e) best solution (prove it), f) overcoming objections, g) visualization, h) step to actuate.
5. I then fill in each section with the information I have available, not worrying about the copy – just bullets and thoughts
6. Theme the ad. How will the ad catch attention? Is there a theme I can use? If you could actually read the copy in the small ads above, you would see that the copy follows the theme. For example, with the "Tired of Nursing Your Exchange Server" the copy included phrases like, "given birth, improper feeding and care, sour, stink, your "product" baby, tried milk—now try some meat, pamper yourself, run...don't crawl, automated babysitter, stop the crying, etc.
7. Decide what your promotions/offer will be. Do not take this lightly—this is one of the most critical steps to get a response.
8. Fill in the blanks with conversational copy and then route it.
9. Now it is time to send the designer these guidelines so they can ad the graphic and setup the layout (make it look good) and still create a persuasive ad.
10. Done. Time to print and sell some product!

I hope these guidelines helped.

Best regards,

Ted

[www.chanimal.com](http://www.chanimal.com)

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512-947-7016

[www.chanimal.com](http://www.chanimal.com) (Chanimal – The Ultimate Resource for Software Marketing)

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