

SHORTCUTS ARE TEMPTING– BUT RARELY PAY OFF!

by Terry Thomas

One day not long ago, I was out mountain biking (one of my passions) in the southern California hills. Struggling against the heat and gravity as I began an extended climb, I noticed a path to my right which cut over to where I was headed, circumventing the major portion of my climb.

Smiling as I thought about how much time and effort I was going to save, I quickly turned the bike and embarked upon my "shortcut". Suddenly, after a long descent, I noticed the trail up ahead was covered— with cow manure!! It seems that this trail was used for more than mountain biking! With no choice, and figuring a little manure never hurt anybody, I forged ahead.

As I surveyed the remainder of my "shortcut", I realized that I was going to go through some heavy brush. But, already committed to this part of the trail, I headed on. I cruised around a corner and stopped dead in my tracks! Up ahead of me was the biggest darn mountain lion I had ever seen! I sat there and stared at this thing for what seemed an eternity, wondering just what I was going to do. With all kinds of grizzly thoughts of my impending demise running through my head, my furry friend turned and calmly disappeared into the brush. Thank God he was well fed!

After my heart stopped jumping through my chest, and my breathing returned to normal, I continued on and finally emerged from my shortcut. As I sat there, thinking how much better it would have been if I had just made the climb I realized something. Many times, when you take shortcuts to arrive at your goal you end up with manure all over yourself, and you just might get eaten alive! The same is true in mail order!

The following are areas in mail order where you should avoid shortcuts.

Printing

Never skimp on printing. The printed material you put out is your "salesman on paper". You must present a good image. Even more important than the content, is the quality of the printed material itself. The most poorly written sales letter, on quality paper and professionally typeset will outpull the greatest sales prose ever written if it is presented on poor quality paper and is poorly typeset. Get the best printing you can afford.

The Sales Package

Don't send a prospective customer a sales package that appears unprofessional! Use envelopes with your return address typeset. Use quality letterhead. Include a phone number where the customer can reach you for questions. And, do not stuff too many sales circulars in one envelope! Once you sell a customer something, then you can mail additional offers to them.

Mailing Lists

Do not use cheap, overused mailing lists. You should get the best mailing list available, even if it is double or triple the cost. If the list pulls double or triple the response, you end up with a lower actual cost per inquiry or sale.

Advertising

Don't forget to test your ads to see how they pull, and constantly change them to test different variables. Prepare ads that are crisp, clean, and professionally typeset. Take the time to do them right, and to test them fully.

Patience

Don't be tempted to rush things without taking time to do them right. Start small, work hard, be persistent, and be patient!

These are just a few areas in mail order where you shouldn't take shortcuts. Remember that the after-effects of manure take a long time to wear off, and the mountain lions in the mail order world are always hungry!

Terry Thomas is an author, publisher, and business owner. He publishes the innovative and provocative newsletter, MAIL-ORDER MARKETING NEWS. This newsletter provides a continuing education in the mail-order field, along with money-making opportunities, rip-off alerts, and industry information. For a FREE sample issue, and other money-making opportunities, send 3 loose First Class Stamps, or \$1.00 to: TJT Publications, P.O. Box 55685, Valencia, CA 91385.