PROMOTIONAL WRITING FORMULA
Guidelines For Persuasion

1. Don't start with what you want to say. Start with what you want your reader to do. (Desired Action Response).

2. Formalize your Desired Action Response into a single statement, agreed upon by all people who will be involved in the final approval.

3. List the key motivations that would cause the reader to take the Desired Action Response (Research may be necessary here).

4. Prepare a flow-chart of the things that need to happen in the reader's mind to get him or her to take the Desired Action Response. Be sure it addresses positive motivations, overcomes serious obstacles or misconceptions, and clarifies what it is that he or she is expected to do.

5. Write a copy outline (using actual sub-heads) that converts the flow-chart into a persuasive communication. (Reading these sub-heads should generate the Desired Action Response without the reader having to read any text copy.)

6. Headlines and overall design decisions should be subservient to this sub-head copy outline. . .and ultimately to the Desired Action Response.

7. Write the narrative copy to fill in each sub-head section. Remember each word, each sentence, and each paragraph should play a part in generating the Desired Action Response. And don't be afraid of restating benefits or readdressing key motivations in different sections because very few readers will ever read all copy front to back. Most will probably skim lightly and might miss your main promotional thrust if you've only mentioned it in one place.

8. Use Failure-Analysis techniques to reevaluate your solution from another perspective and to verify the accuracy of all information.

9. Don't let others change your copy or concept for style or preference unless they can justify the change based on these same guidelines.

10. If possible, test your copy and concept on an audience sample. . .not by asking for their opinion, but rather by measuring whether or not they take the Desired Action Response.

Source: The National Institute for Organizational Research and Problem-Solving, Ann Arbor, Michigan