

## **\* MARKETING MAGIC \***

### **MAGIC WORDS**

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A slogan should be like a mantra – memorable, resonant and subtly powerful.

As a copywriter, writing slogans is one of the most challenging things I'm called on to do for my clients. The right words will compel people to find out more, inspire confidence and build brand loyalty. The wrong ones may result in lost business.

A slogan, or strapline, is a key message that sums up a brand. According to LingoLAB, a London-based branding agency, it should encapsulate the brand's "core values, personality and market positioning". Think Stella Artois and "Reassuringly Expensive".

In August 2004 Nestlé announced their decision to scrap the immortal strapline "Have a break – Have a KitKat" in favour of "Make the most of your break". Author Fay Weldon, former copywriter and originator of the gem "Go to work on an egg", responded with a scathing piece in *The Guardian*. "Break it off, guys", she quipped, "it won't work. Think again. You change a slogan at your peril; at the very least it's got to be snappier than the one before."

But she had a serious point. The original KitKat slogan was fun and sensual, evoking the satisfying snap as you break off a chocolate-covered wafer finger, and playfully inferred that a break isn't really a break without one! The new line just doesn't shout "KitKat!".

Once you've found a slogan that works for your business, or a particular product line or service, stick with it unless changing circumstances mean it loses its impact. The slogan will become an integral part of your brand, reinforcing and consolidating it.

Of course you can use different straplines for different promotional campaigns, or for targeting different segments of your audience. However it's essential to maintain a consistent "voice" to avoid confusing your brand identity. And it still pays to have one overarching phrase that sums up what your business is all about.

Your strapline doesn't have to be self-referential, i.e. to mention the name of your brand. But if it does it's likely to remain in people's memories linked with what you're selling, rather than just as a catchy phrase. Do you automatically associate "It does exactly what it says on the tin" with Ronseal?

If you're trying to devise a strapline for your business, it's helpful to start out by brainstorming. Keep your intended target audience and the essence of your brand in mind, then just let the ideas flow, getting them down on paper, or on screen, without judging whether they're good or bad.

When you run out of ideas, look through the ones you've come up with. Do any of them leap out at you? Could any of them be improved to make them snappier or more resonant? Maybe some more ideas will occur while you're doing this.

Do something else for a while before coming back to your ideas and refining your list down to the three or four that work best for you. Then show them to someone else and see what they think. If possible seek the opinion of one or more of your current or potential clients – after all, they're exactly the kind of people you want to appeal to.

When you've isolated the strongest contender, make sure you're completely happy with the message it puts out about your company before you start to use it.

Your slogan could be the key to your future prosperity. What are the magic words for your business?

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