

What's in it for me?

It's Copywriting 101

If you ever looked at any basic copywriting advice, you'd probably have seen the bit where they tell you to talk about the benefits of whatever it is you are writing about. Benefits is what is in it for the audience. Perhaps they get a good price, or look younger, or help save the world. You are always supposed to highlight what the audience gets from the good or service or organization you are promoting. It's Copywriting 101.

But spammers don't take copywriting classes

The other day I got a spam email (meaning it was from someone I don't know, who probably harvested my name from the internet, and is trying to sell me something). I got the same email again yesterday. Here's what the email said:

Hi Deborah,

I just came across your blog madmimi.com and wanted to reach out to you. I am reaching out because I was wondering if you would post a 500 word article that contains 2-3 links that would be relevant to the article topic. The article would also need to be written .

Please advise on the cost for this service and if you offer a bulk pricing package.

Have an awesome Thursday,

Thanks,

[name withheld]

So many questions

Okay. Let's start with the blindingly obvious problem. I don't have a blog called madmimi.com (I do, however, used Mad Mimi for my sadly neglected newsletter).

Let's go on to the next part of the email: I'm being asked to post an article, presumably on my blog, about a non-disclosed topic, and include two or three links, but to where exactly? The article "would have to be written," presumably by me. Then the writer wants to know the cost for this service.

But really there is nothing in it for me

I'm supposed to conclude, only guessing here, that this email's writer is willing to pay me to write an article about whatever I want to post on my own blog. But of course, that makes no sense. The email writer must have a subject in mind. And really, why would I post an article about any random subject on my blog, and charge someone for it if there is nothing in it for them, and it is not clear what is in it for me? I already have an established blog (you are reading it right now), where I have been posting articles written by me for the past 10+ years.

It seems that what the email writer is really trying to do, quite in-artfully, is to get me to respond asking for more information or perhaps check out the website associated with the writer's email address. That's why this is spam.

Answer "what's it in it for me?"

If you want anything you write to succeed, start with how your audience benefits. What will they get from it? Imagine if this spammer would have said exactly what he/she meant (i.e., we'll pay you to promote our product/service on your blog), I may have been more interested. Instead, I wrote a blog post about how bad these spammers are at selling. Perhaps it was a win after all.