



Avrick's Axioms by David Bancroft Avrick

1. **Do** put the money in the bank – **Don't** delay payments or deposits. free estimate, free delivery, free analysis. Always include a FREE offer.
2. **Don't** say I, me, mine, us or our. Never say "we" – **Do** say: YOU, or your. No one cares about you.

Think about the reader who is saying:
'What's in it for me?'
3. **Do** put the reader benefit in the headline. **Don't** save the best for last. **Do** state your primary benefit immediately. You only have a few "seconds" to grab the reader's attention. State your most tempting offer right from the start. Make sure the reader of your headline doesn't say:

**So what?
Who cares?**
4. **Don't** run institutional ads – **Do** ask for an immediate response. No ad should be run without a phone number, an 800#, a free offer. Limited number, ask for action now, today, this instant.
5. **Do** clearly state your USP. **Do** understand the difference between a headline and your USP. **Do** understand the difference between a USP and a slogan. Use it all the time. On everything you print, on your building, use it everywhere.

Another way of expressing this is Unique **Buying Advantage** – which positions your statement in the mind of the BUYER [not you, the seller].
6. **Do** use the magic word: FREE – **Don't** use a conditional FREE unless necessary. Can be
7. **Don't** sell more than one product at a time (unless you have a catalog).
8. **Do** call to action – request the response (phone, mail, whatever) be done **today**. "Now - limited - must respond today!" Tell the reader they must respond 'now'. Give them a specific deadline.
9. **Do** include a guarantee. Use risk reversal. Assure the reader there is absolutely no risk.
10. **Don't** use a self-mailer, they don't work. They don't have a letter – mailings must have a letter. Direct mail is a 'personal' media and self-mailers never look personal.
11. **Don't** print in reverses (white letters with a colored background).
12. **Don't** let the publication, or yellow pages, set your type or do your artwork.
13. **Don't** print in ALL CAPS. YOU CAN'T READ IT.
14. **Do** use sweepstakes, gimmicks, pop ups, stickers, rub-offs, etc. They always work. Sweepstakes will improve results by 50% or more. Involvement devices ALWAYS work!
15. **Don't** put a question in the headline ... ever! Put the primary benefit in the headline – a positive statement – a promise to fulfill their desires.

16. **Don't** use a premium that will bite you (e.g. vacation certificates, many barter deals). Dollar for dollar premiums are better incentives than a cash offer. Two premiums are often better than one. If you can't come up with a great premium idea use a "mystery gift".
17. **Don't** use humor, **don't** be cute, **don't** be clever, **don't** use double entendres (Simmons beds for the Rest of Your Life). Humor does not wear well – when the ad is repeated you get disgusted with the ad and hostile towards the advertiser.
18. **Don't** use multiple type fonts.
19. **Don't** use sans serif type ... except high-tech offers.
20. **Don't** run type on dark backgrounds.
21. **Don't** run type in light color ink.
22. **Do** use personalization wherever possible. Address people as customers, attendees, subscribers. People love to see their name in print. The more you do the more it pulls, every time.
23. **Do** specify right hand page, outside column, as close up front as possible when buying space in a newspaper or magazine (**Don't** ever pay a premium for position).
24. **Do** promote to your previous customers, again and again. A two-time buyer is twice as likely to buy as a one-time buyer is. You cannot over-promote to your buyers. There is really no such thing as 'burning out your list'.
25. **Do** offer lower prices to bring in more customers. The same offer at different prices will bring in the same gross income per thousand pieces mailed. You'll get 50 orders @ \$20 – or 20 orders @ \$50.
26. **Do** offer credit. A credit or 'bill-more' offer will improve results by 50% or more.
27. **Do** convert your 'subscription' offer to a membership offer – it will renew 10% better. People would rather join than subscribe or purchase. People love to JOIN.
28. **Do** use department store pricing (\$9.95 vs. \$10.00) – except for membership offers.
29. **Do** make your special offer believable – otherwise it will not succeed. Credibility is one of the most important elements in any advertising campaign.
30. **Do** offer installment payments. You'll see a 15% lift if the product sells for \$15 or more.
31. **Do** add additional elements to your mailing package even though it adds cost. It's more likely to pay out than cheapening the package. You may say: "Who reads all this stuff?" But the truth is that test after test proves that the more 'inserts' you have the better the response.
32. **Do** offer a "no" option. Yes/No options increase orders. The "no" – makes the 'limited' offer believable.
33. **Do** use long copy. The more you tell the more you sell. There's no such thing as copy that is too long; it's only too boring.
34. **Do** repeat your entire offer in a brochure, as well as the letter. The reader should be able to act after reading either piece.
35. **Do** pay attention to your mailing lists – they are the most important element in your mailing campaign. Capture every name – everyone that buys, everyone that inquires, everyone that comes into your place of business. When you rent names you want 'recent' names ~ 30 day buyers (hotline).
36. **Do** make your letters look and feel like letters. **Do** make sure they have a salutation and a signature. Use type fonts that look like a typewriter.
37. **Do** use special offers to your customer list. Special prices, special terms, special premiums. People like to feel special ... reward them for the business they favor you with.
38. **Do** re-mail profitable lists. A re-mailing of the exact same piece to the exact same list, two to three weeks later, will still produce 50% of the original response.

39. **Do** use simple, short, easy-to-read words, short sentences, short paragraphs. Seventy percent of your words should be 5 or fewer letters long. **Don't** be afraid of one word sentences. They work! Honestly! No more than 6 or 7 lines to a paragraph.
40. **Do** indent your paragraphs — that's what people are used to seeing. You want to make your written words 'comfortable' to the reader.
41. **Do** underline important phrases and words. Your prospects will scan your document — make sure their eyes go to your most important statements. Highlight your benefits. Indent key statements. Use bold typefaces. Use bulleted copy that's easy to read.
42. **Don't** ever write a letter without a PS. Use it to re-state your primary benefit, create urgency and ask for action. Readers often look here first, so make it intriguing.
43. **Do** use wonder-words (in addition to the most wonderful of all: FREE) new, how to, suddenly, now, announcing, introducing, it's here, just arrived, improvement, sensational, remarkable, amazing, revolutionary, startling, miracle, magic, offer, quick, easy, wanted, challenged, compare, bargain, hurry, last chance, save, money, help, results, discover, proven, guarantee, safety, gift, premium, below-cost, discount, satisfaction, 100% guarantee, news, important development, the truth about, new and improved, you, you, you, you, you, you, you.
44. **Do** use endorsers - Stars, athletes, well known personalities help give you credibility. Use third party endorsements.
45. **Do** let the recipient know if you're mailing first class ~ don't keep it a secret. Be sure your envelope is clearly printed "First Class".
46. **Do** put a caption beneath every photograph.
47. **Don't** confuse features with benefits. Consumers don't care about the machines — they care about the results. I don't want to buy a lathe ~ I want to make a chair!
- Stress what the reader gets, not what the product does.
48. **Don't** use music in direct response radio or television advertising. Music is fine for institutional ads where you're trying to create an impression — but if you want people to call you, or write to you — don't use music.
49. **Do** make it easy for people to respond. Include 800 numbers and business reply forms. More than 70,000,000 Americans purchase item over the phone. 6 out of 7 customers prefer doing business with firms who have an 800 number.
50. **Do** tell the reader what to do. Direct their action. If you want them to turn the page — tell them so. Do direct the reader's eye
↓
Use arrows and graphics to control the flow of the copy.
51. **Do** break pages in the middle of sentence — or the middle of a word. Keep the reader moving from page to page.
52. **Do** use perforations around coupons.
53. **Do** add a dollar value to anything you're giving free, or as part of the package. Make sure the reader knows the value of this gift or bonus.
54. **Do** remember to ask for the order. Tell the reader exactly what their next step is. Don't assume they will know it's time to call (or mail) the order in.
55. **Do** pile on the financial advantages. Restate, denominate and summarize all of the reader's advantages.
56. **Do** make as big a promise as you can live up to.
Don't sell yourself short.