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11th July 2011

Dear Mr. Bird

Thank you very much for all you've taught me. Your book *How to Write Sales Letters that Sell* really hauled me out of a tight spot. Thank goodness I was reading it at the same time my colleague Heather told me we had a real problem at the Theatre where I've been working...

You see, The Theatre Royal had persuaded Sir Stirling Moss to put on a fundraising exhibition. He would bring himself and eight of his racing cars to Bury St Edmunds. Just 5 weeks beforehand, and only 35 tickets were pre sold. Imagine the embarrassment if only 35 people showed up.

I turned to your book. I used it as my bible. I learnt new techniques to include in my work, such as getting to the point early on, writing to the individual, using flattery and countless other pearls of wisdom that brought an agreeing smile to my face.

Using your book as my aide I wrote a letter and mailed it out to 17 local car clubs. 2 got back to me, and the word was spread to over 150 individual members. Other clubs had taken note and posted the event on their websites for their members. Less than a month later and we'd pre-sold over 165 tickets. On the door a further 500 people showed up. Overall the event and show that took place made over £11,000.

This was of course a much smaller scale to David Ogilvy's first direct mail experience, in which he "tasted blood." However with help from your book I now understand what he meant.

After the success of the Stirling Moss exhibition I knew I had to write a letter to you, and find out if I have the mindset that you look for in a young employee. I invite you to open my second envelope if you're willing to at least consider my request...

Let me work for you as a trainee at minimum wage. Fire me after a month if I'm no good.

I understand that you are probably bombarded with letters asking for jobs or work experience. I appreciate that you're busy, and perhaps get irritated with such requests. Thankfully, I'm not writing to waste your time...

Of course I wouldn't write to you if I'd only read one book on advertising. Along with *How to Write Sales Letters that Sell*, I've also read *Commonsense Direct Marketing*, *Ogilvy on Advertising*, *Confessions of an Advertising Man*, *Tested Advertising Methods*, *How to Write a Good Advertisement*, *The Fundamentals of Creative Advertising*, *Write to Sell*, *The Art of Account Planning*, *A Technique for Producing Ideas* and of course the Claude Hopkins books *My Life in Advertising* and *Scientific Advertising*. I'm now reading *How to Advertise*.

I know from reading your books, that you're irritated with those who don't take the time to learn their trade, fearing it would crush their "creativity." Rest assured that I have done my homework, and will never stop doing my homework. Nobody is too good to learn something new. Do you agree?

I also wouldn't write to you if I'd only written one sales letter. How bold that would be? Instead my portfolio has been an ongoing project for over a year now. In the second envelope you'll find 5 pieces of creative work I've written. Some have been used out in the real world. Others were simply exercises to bolster my portfolio. They are as follows...

1. *"The £5 Stirling Moss Exhibition that your club members deserve to know about"*

The letter I wrote with your book at my side. Of course that doesn't mean it's at your standard and I'm sure you can spot problems with this piece. But it does single out the prospect, deliver a promise and guide to action. I'm sure you'll agree that more important than anything else, this letter produced results.

2. *"The Cycle Centre offers a free D-lock hire for your personal bikes"*

My manager at the Cycle Centre was pulling his hair out over a security problem at Centre Parcs. I pitched this letter to him as a way of solving the problem without saying to guests "there are thieves on park!" The idea was very well received and my manager is aiming to put it into use. I have also produced posters that are based on this letter. These are now being used around the park.

3. *iStopmotion gets your children animating instead of vegetating*

I wrote this advert purely as an exercise. I'm an animation enthusiast, and used iStopmotion a lot for my work as a media student. It's my favourite software so I was able to deliver plenty of enthusiasm. I was inspired by the David Abbott headline *How to get your children stuck into a book instead of glued to the television.*

4. *To Garden owners about to lose £49.99, £149.99 or even £229.99*

I posted 50 flyers through people's doors selling this service. This produced 2 jobs and made me £100. A reasonable result, but it could have been better. I went to London for a day to meet a creative director of a small advertising agency and to show her my portfolio. I asked her to be ruthless in her criticism. She gave me pointers on where I'd gone wrong with the original version of this advert. I'm sure that this new advert is a great improvement on the old one. Unfortunately, at the moment I've been working two jobs, 7 days a week and haven't had the time to try this out again.

5. *"These three sectors are on the cusp of delivering you 2011's Penny Share Jackpot"*

I undertook a work experience placement with Money Week Magazine in their direct mail division and wrote this letter for internet use. The most important thing I learnt with them was that a good headline (particularly when selling financial newsletters) relies on "the four U's." The headline had to be urgent, ultra-specific, useful and unique. It was back to the drawing board if three of these four U's weren't nailed in the headline.

Of course at 22 years old I still have a lot to learn. However, my hope is that you see I have the potential and enthusiasm to excel with your company. I hope my work shows that I've done my homework, and while it is not nearly in the same league as the work of yourself, Ogilvy, Hopkins and others, it does show an understanding of the principles you all teach.

At this point in my life I don't care about making big money. What I do care about is creating a future for myself in direct response copywriting. That's why I only ask for minimum wage. You can employ me part-time if you wish. I don't want more money than I need to get by.

At just £5.93 per hour I could prove to be cracking value for money. And of course if you decide I'm not great value you can fire me. You'd be the first to do this however. I always leave a good impression...

"Alex's contribution to a variety of ideas and suggestions of ways that the Stirling Moss event could be publicized was considerable. He made direct approaches to the media, including radio and TV, as well as local and regional press and was also involved in research and contact with appropriate audiences such as car clubs and motoring enthusiasts. The event was extremely successful and raised the highly profitable sum of £11,000 for theatre funds."

Heather Tilbury Phillips (Heather Tilbury Marketing and Public Relations)

"Alex is an articulate and intelligent young man with an enquiring mind. I set him a challenge of looking at the items sold within the cycle centre shop and devising advertising posters. Two in particular hit the spot and are used as advertising posters within my shop. He has shown the ability to look at things from different

perspectives and to come up with reasoned and balanced solutions. Alex has the ability to perform as required and to manage tasks with little or no supervision. He will be an asset to any organisation."

Ady Powell (Cycle Centre Manager)

You've probably also found I sent you a stamped envelope with my name and address written on it. I thought it would be much easier for you jot down a response and reply through the post. All my other contact details are at the top of my CV which is also enclosed.

Once again, thank you very much for everything you share in your books.

Yours Sincerely,

Alex Busson

P.S. Whether you offer pointers on my work, advice on what to do next, or simply write to tell me to pick a different career path, you can't imagine how happy I'd be to receive a reply of even a few lines. I do hope you're able to do this, as you're the only person I've written to.