Breakthrough Copywriting

How to Write Killer Direct Response Letters

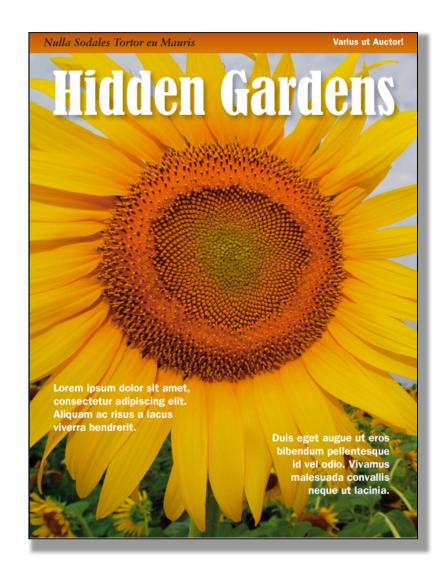




Case Study



Hidden Gardens magazine







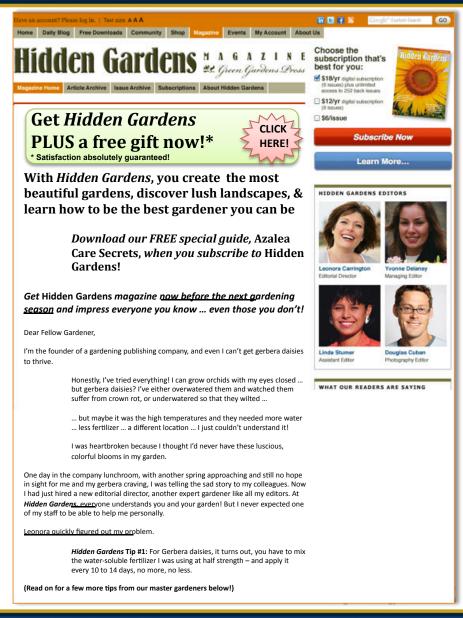
Sales letter

SEO:

Number of keywords / total number of words X number of words in KW phrase

Hidden Gardens:

55/2132 X 2 = 5%



Elements of a great sales letter



Headlines



With *Hidden Gardens*, you create the most beautiful gardens, discover lush landscapes, & learn how to be the best gardener you can be

And download our **FREE** special guide, Azalea Care Secrets, when you subscribe to Hidden Gardens!

Get Hidden Gardens magazine now before the next gardening season and impress everyone you know ... even those you don't!

Product title/
keyword phrase up
front to optimize
for search

Stress the free offer

Create urgency





Headlines



most beautiful gardens, discover lush landscapes, & learn how to be the best gardener you can be

And download our FREE special guide, Azalea Care Secrets, when you subscribe to Hidden Gardens!

Get Hidden Gardens magazine now <u>before the</u>
<u>next gardening season</u> and <u>impress everyone</u>

you know ... even those you don't!

Stress benefits, not features

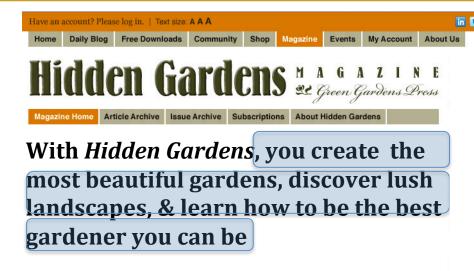
Use power words: create, discover, learn, best, most





Flashback: Focus on benefits

Google™ Custom Search



And download our FREE special guide, Azalea Care Secrets, when you subscribe to Hidden Gardens!

Get Hidden Gardens magazine now <u>before the</u>
<u>next gardening season</u> and <u>impress everyone</u>
<u>you know</u> ... even those you don't!

The ads are based entirely on service. They offer wanted information. They cite advantages to users.

- Claude Hopkins

Scientific Advertising

1923





Flashback: The original Johnson box

Frank Johnson

American Heritage

magazine letter

1959

This letter contains

- one rare picture of a vanished American,
- the story of an extraordinary magazine,
- some words of amplification about both the above -- plus
- news of a good introductory offer.





Story and content

Dear Fellow Gardener,

I'm the founder of a gardening publishing company, and even I can't get gerbera daisies to thrive.

Honestly, I've tried everything! I can grow orchids with my eyes closed ... but gerbera daisies? I've either overwatered them and watched them suffer from crown rot, or underwatered so that they wilted ...

... but maybe it was the high temperatures and they needed more water ... less fertilizer ... a different location ... I just couldn't understand it!

I was heartbroken because I thought I'd never have these luscious, colorful blooms in my garden.

One day in the company lunchroom, with another spring approaching and still no hope in sight for me and my gerbera craving, I was telling the sad story to my colleagues. Now I had just hired a new editorial director, another expert gardener like all my editors. At *Hidden Gardens*, everyone understands you and your garden! But I never expected one of my staff to be able to help me personally.

Leonora quickly figured out my problem ...

... That summer, for the first time ever, I had bright and cheerful Gerberas gracing my garden. I was so happy when they survived their first month, I almost cried!

Emotional/ personal story





Flashback: Telling a personal story



John Caples
U.S. School of Music ad
1920s





"Architectural" elements

Don't

 Bold, italic, underline

Blocking

- Bullets
- Subheads

Hidden Gardens makes you a master gardener

Don't we all have those personal failures, no matter how long we've been gardening? That one plant that somehow has failed to thrive ... or the disappointment of ordering something that looks gorgeous in a catalog, and finding out it hates the spot you picked out for it. Have you ever spent an entire winter waiting breathlessly to see all the bulbs you planted so painstakingly in the fall deliver bursts of spring color – only to be disappointed? Do your most carefully-planned landscapes become nothing but a beautiful maintenance headache? Do you spend your time designing, planting and perfecting your gardens, only to have your neighbor – the one who just wings it – getting all the praise?

Every gardener deserves admiration for their hard work. And every gardener deserves the kind of expert advice and understanding that I get just by going to the office! That's why you deserve to read *Hidden Gardens* magazine, the most unique gardening magazine available today!



Flashback: "Architectural" elements

Bill Jayme
Quest/78
letter
1970s

Ever expect a dozen or so— and have a multitude show up7 That's what happened to us not long ago when we published our very first is— sue. At a time when our country was supposedly wallowing in gloom and doorn—corruption, violence, port—how many people, we wondered, would go for a magazine about quality, excellence, achievement. 100,000? 200,000? Wrong! The minute Votume I, Number of came off the presses, the lines began to form. And by today, they stretch cross-continent—from New York to California, it from Texas to Illinois. Lo and behold, a magazine about success is itself a success without parallel.

Quest/78

This letter invites you to find out what all the hoopla is about . . . to get in on this unusual new publication without having to stand in line . . . and to save a substantial amount of money . . . by becoming a

CHARTER SUBSCRIBER

Dear fellow adventurer:

Remember how great it felt that first time?

You were ten, maybe eleven or twelve. They'd given it to you for your birthday. They held it steady while you climbed into the saddle. They pushed. And then they let go.

You picked up speed. The wobbling ceased. Suddenly, you were off--hair streaming, wind in your face, biking away to China, and you loved it!

Or maybe it was when you were older. Finally, Friday came. Three o'clock. Four o'clock. Ten minutes to five. At last, there it was--the envelope.

You ripped it open. Your first paycheck ever! All yours! And you'd earned every penny! You were richer than Rockefeller, and you loved it!

Or maybe it was the time you got through all three acts without forgetting a line. Or when you first had your picture in the paper. Or succeeded in cooking a meal from start to finish entirely by yourself.

Or when you first wrote a poem that wasn't half bad. Or proudly signed your name to a painting. Or shot par golf. Tossed a winning touchdown. Or welcomed your first-born to the world...

If it's been too long since you've experienced thrills and chills like these--moments of exhilaration, elation, accomplishment ...

If you're ready to become enthralled again -- with challenge, with achievement, with yourself ...

... then welcome to QUEST/78. The new magazine that brings out the best in you. The magazine that says "try it!" The magazine that engages you, challenges you, urges you on. The magazine that makes you feel good all over.

With this letter, I invite you to have a look at QUEST/78 under our 100 percent refund guarantee. And if you like it, to become a Charter Subscriber.

You'll save yourself an immediate \$3--a discount of 25 percent off. And his savings is only the first of many. Keep reading for how you'll save more:

Almost since Adam and Eve first woke up under the apple tree, poets, philosophers and pundits have been attempting to define human existence. To some, life is dismal and dreary. Samuel Butler found it "one long process of getting tired." Victor Hugo called it "an abyss."

Napoleon found it "a hore" and "a cross." Voltaire, "a combat." Shakespeare, "a walking shadow." One eminent Victorian, P. J. Bailey, went to the extreme of comparing it to "a bridge of groans across a stream of tears." Desperation!

Others, mercifully, find living more fun. America's own Ralph Waldo Emerson called life "a series of surprises ... an ecstasy." And QUEST/78 cries, "Bear, Hear:" Just lift back that elegant cover, and you'll see:

Pages upon pages about people who are enjoying their lives to the fullest-making each minute count, getting the most out of every hour, every day, every week. Plus pages upon pages about you-and how you can go do the same.

Kant to find out how to make it in the world of getting and gending? In QUSST/78, owne learn from Saul Zabar. We happens to run the world's best delicatessen. But his real, dedication, and enthusiasm would make him a success at almost anything--president of a steel company, president of a university, President of the United States!

Or come get to know anthropologist Margaret Mead at age 75up and about at 5 a.m. in her Manhattan apartment or rehearse a speech she'll be giving that afternoon, then settling in to her typewriter, where by day's end she may just add yet another line or two to the 49 she already commands in Nip's Who!

-2-





Personal story

Identify with the reader – remind them why they're reading this letter.

... Don't we all have those personal failures, no matter how long we've been gardening? That one plant that somehow has failed to thrive ... or the disappointment of ordering something that looks gorgeous in a catalog, and finding out it hates the spot you picked out for it. Have you ever spent an entire winter waiting breathlessly to see all the bulbs you planted so painstakingly in the fall deliver bursts of spring color – only to be disappointed? Do your most carefully-planned landscapes become nothing but a beautiful maintenance headache? Do you spend your time designing, planting and perfecting your gardens, only to have your neighbor – the one who just wings it – getting all the praise?



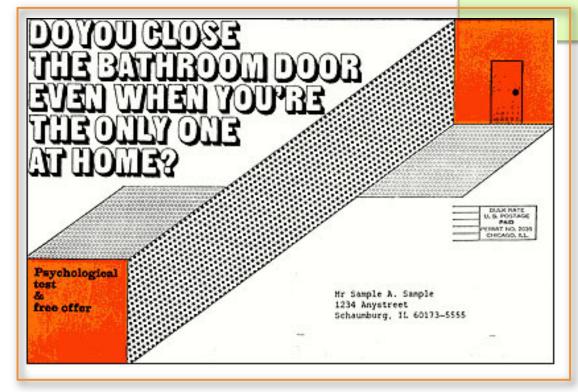


Flashback: Getting personal

Bill Jayme

Psychology Today

1960s







Power words

Achieve

You

Satisfy

How to

Learn

Know

Exciting

Understand

Unique

Immediately

Discover

Expert

Master

Help Latest

Plus

Famous

Create

Complete

Wonderful

Enjoy

Save

Guarantee

New

More

Proven

Amazing

Best

Free

Secrets



Special



Free tips as engagement device

. . .

Leonora quickly figured out my problem.

Hidden Gardens Tip #1: For gerbera daisies, it turns out, you have to mix the water-soluble fertilizer I was using at half strength – and apply it every 10 to 14 days, no more, no less.

(Read on for a few more tips from our master gardeners below!)





The importance of OFIE

That summer, for the first time ever, I had bright and cheerful gerberas gracing my garden. I was so happy when they survived their first month, I almost cried!

-----OFIE------

Discover the world's most amazing hidden gardens and become the gardener you always wanted to be!

Subscribe to **Hidden Gardens** today to get full subscriber benefits PLUS a FREE copy of our special guide, **Azalea Care Secrets.**

Just click on the button below to subscribe to *Hidden Gardens*. Once you subscribe, you'll get an email link to download your FREE special guide. PLUS you'll be notified by email when we post new tips about gardening, garden travel, garden photography, growing azaleas and more!

YES! I want to subscribe to Hidden Gardens!

-----/OFIE-----



The importance of OFIE

Azalea Care Secrets will make you a master, from growing to transplanting and pruning, overwintering, and more!

Subscribe to Hidden Gardens now, and get Azalea Care

Secrets absolutely FREE!

-----OFIE------

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YES! I want to subscribe to Hidden Gardens!

-----/OFIE-----



Your USP

USP

Underline key words to allow skimming

You know what I love most about *Hidden Gardens*? It's a completely unique gardening magazine that doesn't just give growing advice, it's also about travel and photography for gardeners. I'd love for you to come with me to the orchid gardens of Hawaii and discover the master gardeners' secrets for growing the world's most beautiful orchids. Or venture into the farmlands of the Netherlands to discover the history, the majesty, and the diversity of the tulip and the bulb industry that it built!

Wherever *Hidden Gardens* takes us, we <u>interview the master</u> gardeners behind the world's garden gems to share in the <u>secrets of their success</u>. And one of the most unique things about *Hidden Gardens* is that every issue includes a step-by-step how-to garden photography session with one of our master photographers, where he reveals the creative process that leads to our famous *Hidden Gardens* cover shots.





Powerful combination of elements

Travel around the world with Hidden Gardens

Hidden Gardens takes you to festivals, small towns, historical locations and secret gardens that most gardeners will never see. Recently in Hidden Gardens, we've shared all these wonderful stories and photos with our readers:

- •Gardening in the World's Remote Places: the Pacific island of Kwajalein and the Garden of Dreams in Kathmandu, Nepal
- •Revolution in the Litchfield Hills: Historic Glebe House and the Jekyll Garden
- •Showcasing the Latest Varieties at the Demonstration Garden at Monument Valley Park
- •Intimate Photos of Boboli Gardens and the Pitti Palace
- •The World's Most Spectacular Tulips Surprise, It's Britzer Garten in Berlin!
- •The Fountains and Flora of Generalife Garden at La Alhambra



Powerful combination of elements

Hidden Gardens not only takes you around the world without leaving your garden bench, it also helps you ...

- Create stunning gardens at home that will stop traffic
- Implement the newest design techniques
- Learn wildlife and garden photography tips from the experts
- Discover amazing plants you never heard of
- Save time and money in developing your ideal landscape
- Enjoy your garden more while working less
- Achieve your dream garden at last!





At last ... features

Hidden Gardens has so much to offer that's unique in gardening publications. As a subscriber, you'll enjoy all this and more:

- 68 advertising-free pages per issue, bursting with color, gardening ideas and garden travel articles every other month
- A featured garden photography lesson
- Our Ask the Gardener sections for readers' burning questions
- Special discounts on our famous Hidden Gardens tours
- Special discounts on gardening books and DVDs

Why the reader should subscribe

You'll want to read *Hidden Gardens* in the coming months for more advice on these wonderful gardens, plus you'll also <u>learn</u> how to take gorgeous photos of the butterflies as they enjoy your plants!





Confidence element

... I want to give you my PERSONAL satisfaction guarantee:

If at any time you're not satisfied with *Hidden Gardens*, just let me know and <u>I'll give you a complete refund on your entire subscription price!</u> And you <u>still get to keep</u> *Azalea Care Secrets*, the special FREE report that helps even the azalea-challenged master this lovely shrub!

That's a 100% money-back guarantee, personally backed by the publisher of *Hidden Gardens!* That's how confident I am that you'll love *Hidden Gardens* magazine.





Calls to action throughout

7 OFIES

Discover the world's most amazing hidden gardens and become the gardener you always wanted to be!

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YES! I want to subscribe to Hidden Gardens!

--/OFIE-----

5 calls to action in text

... That's why you should get Hidden Gardens magazine, the most unique gardening magazine available today!

Subscribe now and you'll also get a freebie from me:

4 text links

Subscribe to Hidden Gardens now, and get Azalea Care
Secrets absolutely FREE!





Postscript

PS: I promise *Hidden Gardens* will make your gardening life more exciting and fulfilling than ever, or you get your money back!

PPS: Don't forget, you get an absolutely FREE copy of
Azalea Care Secrets when you subscribe to Hidden Gardens
absolutely no strings
attached!

Postscript summary:

PS:

- Benefit
- Guarantee

PPS:

- Free offer
- Guarantee





Flashback: the "working PS"

Sincerely,

James Parton Publisher

P.S. An early response guarantees you will start with the extra-big and colorful Christmas issue. We're more than seasonally jubilant about the December AMERICAN HERITAGE for a number of good-looking, good reading reasons:

--The Old Showman's Last Triumph. This 12-page picture-story recounts P.T. Barnum's spectacular conquest-by-circus of London in 1889. Royalty and rabble alike gaped at the "stupendous, historical classic drama of Nero: The Destruction of Rome" (1200 People! 380 Horses!). The article is based on a magnificent album of posters, programs and color pictures Barnum put together for his favorite daughter reproduced here for the first time in this country.

--The Sunny Master of Sunnyside, by Curtis Dahl. The beloved creator of Rip Van Winkle and Ichabod Crane bustles back to life in this sparkling visit with Washington Irving. The article is accompanied by a portfolio of paintings by the great Irving illustrators. Among them will be a gatefold picture in full color and nearly a yard wide of Peter Stuyvesant's hilarious ragtag army entering New York, based on Knickerbocker's "History of New York."

--The Great Deception, by Moshe Decter. Part of an AMERICAN HERITAGE series entitled "America and Russia," which examines the entire history of this relationship over nearly two centuries. Mr. Decter illumines the history of the Communist Party in American and analyzes the reasons for the support it gained among so many American intellectuals during the '30s.

--Captain Cook's American, by E.M. Halliday. For Connecticut-born John Ledyard, life as an under-graduate at pre-Revolution Dartmouth failed to satisfy his craving for adventure. He found it as a seaman aboard the H.M.S. Resolution, under the command of the ill-fated Captain Cook. Ledyard became the first American to see Alaska and Hawaii. Brilliantly illustrated, in color and monochrome, with scenes from Ledyard's travels, from Tahiti to the Nile.

And there are stories on: William Jennings Bryan's contributions to the American progressive movement...a scandalous early New England breach-of-promise case, brought by a determined literary lady against a young (much younger) man of the church...an obscure Virginia lad who foiled the kidnap of Jefferson and other Revolutionary leaders by Royalist troops...and much more.

You'll like it. See for yourself?

J.P.

Frank Johnson

American Heritage

letter

1969

MEQUODA

Digital Strategy for Publishers



Complete the package

TEXT ADS

Create the most beautiful gardens, discover lush landscapes, & learn how to be the best gardener you can be with *Hidden Gardens*, PLUS get a <u>FREE</u> special guide, *Azalea Care Secrets*, when you subscribe!

Visit the world's most beautiful gardens and <u>achieve your own</u> <u>dream garden</u> with *Hidden Gardens*, **PLUS** get a <u>FREE</u> special guide, *Azalea Care Secrets*, when you subscribe!

Enjoy your gardening more while working less when you read *Hidden Gardens*. And get a <u>FREE</u> special guide, *Azalea Care Secrets*, when you subscribe!



Power words

Plus Amazing **Improve** Know Free Excellent Health Understand Latest Create Absolutely Guarantee Extraordinary Powerful Secrets Wonderful Fortune New How to Best Enjoy Trust Win Proven Worst Popular Safety **Ultimate** Achieve Rare **Immediately** Money Hot Exciting Magic First Wealth Security Unique Hot Special Big Gigantic Now Master Colossal Today Anniversary **Expert** More Results Premiere Authentic Huge Bonus **Exclusive** Discover **Protect** Basic Colorful **Profit** Help Superior Satisfy Discount **Profitable** Complete Outstanding Bargain Extra Easy Save



Digital Strategy for Publishers

Learn

You

Questions?





Thank You

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