



Well, stories of my demise have been greatly exaggerated...

I'm back – and apologies for the lack of 'Copycats' in the last couple of months, I simply have not had the time to write them...

I seem to have travelled the globe twice since the turn of the year. Shows in Moscow, Cape Town, Dubai, Bucharest and Istanbul, plus other trade and in-house workshops and seminars in the UK have kept me well under the cosh.

As well as clients, of course. As demanding as ever – but as you all know, I love 'em all...☺

Oh yes, I nearly forgot. I have also set up agency affiliations with leading communication groups in Russia and Romania, which is tremendously exciting.

More about Eastern Europe later...

So, it's been all systems go. Stimulating, of course, but tiring too, if I'm honest...

What's quite interesting about direct marketing worldwide is the hunger for knowledge in the emerging countries and the respect that they have for the experience and knowledge of old liggers like me...

It's very, very nice. And especially rewarding if you're passionate about this business...

It's fantastic to go overseas, present at shows and get this kind of reaction. The interest, the desire, the sheer will to learn is incredibly stimulating. Especially when compared to the almost apathetic interest by most marketers in this country in getting better at what they do.

I know I've bored you all before with my incredulity at the lack of studying that goes on in our business here in the U.K. This applies to both agencies and clients.

It's just beyond my comprehension.

No one has a respect for our history in the communications business.

No one bothers to study, to learn from the masters. It appears, from talking to people, that most out there don't feel it's appropriate to look back and see what gems are lurking there.

Someone said to me at Earls Court recently – *“It's a new world now. Those old examples are old hat. Why bother looking at old techniques and examples? They have no place or value these days...”*

As you might expect, I told him he was talking bollocks...

To blinkered idiots like him, I say one thing. *“Times change, but people don't...”*

The reasons people buy and why they buy, the creative and copy triggers that generate interest and response will never change. Yes, we have more channels to market than ever, but it's how you use those channels that's important.

Every single day, I see an increasing number of examples of promotional communications that will not work. Work that is being created by people who do not understand.

If they studied our business a bit more – something they don't think would benefit them – then they would understand...

...and, they would waste a lot less of their own, or their client's money....

That's the difference, you see. Those that study, those that continually try to improve, will always stand a much better chance of producing work that delivers results in a very, very tough marketplace.

This is why Eastern Europe is so interesting right now. I have to tell you, that in my opinion, this area has the strongest DM heartbeat of any place on the globe.

The potential is mind-blowing. What's more, key individuals in leading organisations over there, want to learn. They want to know the secrets.

They yearn for the best techniques.

There are some very smart people over there.

Very smart indeed.

And, when you talk to them and show them examples of the work of the greats - Caples, Hopkins and Ogilvy, plus current legends like Joe Sugarman, Murray Raphael, Herschell Gordon Lewis and the irrepressible Drayton Bird, they want to know more.

I've probably been responsible for selling more books for those giants in the last few years than anyone on this planet!

This is the way it should be. The only way anyone gets better at what they do in this crazy business, is by studying and learning from people who are better than they are.

Incidentally, there's an interesting footnote to all of this. In the last few years, it's quite noticeable, that at most industry events, the audience breakdown is 95% clients, 5% agencies.

I was intrigued by this at first...

Then, when discussing it with people much cleverer than me, the reason became clear. Most agencies don't turn up at Masterclasses and Workshops because they might be seen there by their clients.

They don't want to admit that they don't know stuff...

Incredible, huh? However, given the culture, I suppose it's not too surprising.

It completely explains the increasing level of crap we see though – and a lot of it emanates from agencies with big names over the doors, too.

Basic errors abound. Every single minute of every single day.

Ads with headlines over the pictures instead of under: big blocks of copy reversed out, white out of black, which has a hugely reduced comprehension level: ineffective headlines with 'clever' phrases rather than 'stoppers': badly written copy that neither connects nor influences: outer envelopes with strapline copy that gives the recipient no reason whatsoever to open it...

...the list is endless...

And, it's getting worse, I swear it is. The DM industry in the UK just feels to me as if it's disintegrating...and a lot of my pals and colleagues feel the same...

Here's a good example of what I mean. Just look at this and weep...

## Dell hands brief to Tequila after auction pitch

**Sara Kimberley**

Computer giant Dell has handed its pan-European direct marketing account to Tequila\London following a controversial pitch process.

Dell invited a number of agencies to pitch for the account in an online auction; the business was awarded to the shop with the lowest fee.

The biggest direct seller of computers and peripherals, chose their agency using an ON-LINE AUCTION.

Then they chose the CHEAPEST!

I give up. Lunatics and asylum come to mind.

I have to tell you, when I see stuff like this, I am really pleased that I am the age I am. I would not like to be a youngster coming into this excuse of a communications industry right now.

It's bad and it's getting worse...

By the way, I just received a mailing from Dell this morning. Well, not true, actually...

...I received THREE A4 packs. Exactly the same...

Looks like they're getting what they paid for. Serves 'em right...

But, there are other main causes for concern too. Take the IDMF at Earls Court, for example...

It used to be the home of the biggest DM show in the world. Now, it's just a pale shadow of the great show it once was. Unbelievably, it now appears to be a poor relation to its new bedfellow, Internet World.

It's very, very sad. Being at the birth of that beautiful DM baby all those years ago, it is now quite clear that the baby has not matured and developed as we would have hoped...

Not at all...

But, it's not surprising when you think about it. In the last few years, this particular show had started to decline very noticeably. For anyone wanting to find out what DM is all about, the show is useless.

It is just crammed full of mailing houses, envelope suppliers, associations and list brokers. Nowhere will the inquisitive visitor get the answer to "What is DM?"

Only in the Academy lectures, will you get the real 'meat' – the proven techniques and disciplines that will help to eke out those vital little extra percentage points from campaigns.

I speak at the Academy every year.

This year I did two sessions – one in the DM Academy, the other in The Internet World counterpart.

What was quite revealing and very apposite to what I've said earlier in this article, was some of the comments from delegates in the latter who contacted me after the event. Many expressed more than a little surprise that a lot of the techniques needed to write effective email copy are the same for those used for direct mail.

To be honest, I was staggered that they should think anything else really, but they did.

They believed that because it's a new route to market that the copy would need to be different in some way. What an extraordinary thing to think...

But it's just another example really, of how little knowledge there is out there, of what's important in this business...

Here's another bit of nonsense to make you chuckle. Unless you're the client, of course...



Whoever created this should be shot.

Whoever signed it off should be ashamed.

Do these misguided people really think that readers have got time to work this out? Do they think that people will bother? I can tell you they won't.

It's simply a waste of money...

Anyway, on we go...

Just consider this. It's a mailing selling insurance.

Yes, that's a lizard down there...



Hiscox, 1 Great St. Helen's, London EC3A 6HX  
Registered in England No. 70234



Mr A Owen  
27 Berkswell Close  
Solihull  
West Midlands  
B91 2EH

PD203/1842



## Nearly half the claims we pay would not be covered by a standard insurance policy

Dear Mr Owen

Some people think that lizards are a bad sign, while others credit them with healing powers. Whatever you believe, choosing the right home insurance is not a matter of luck.

### **The most comprehensive home policy you can buy direct**

Consistently awarded five stars by independent market researchers, Defaqto, Hiscox offers cover that other insurers simply do not match. This is why we pay more claims than most. So it's hardly surprising that an extraordinary 97% of customers (surveyed Jan to Oct 2006) were satisfied with our expert claims service.

### **The only direct insurer to offer 'all risks' cover**

Your current insurer probably tells you what is covered on your policy and excludes everything else. Hiscox believes it is fairer to cover all eventualities, while clearly listing the few exclusions. This is 'all risks' cover and currently we are the only direct insurer to offer it - complete with accidental loss, damage and theft cover as standard. Hiscox also covers your belongings anywhere in the world.

### **Complimentary Home Emergency cover**

24 hour Home Emergency cover is automatically included as standard, providing cover up to £500 per incident to repair problems like blocked drains or a failed heating system. Some insurers charge over £80 a year for this kind of service.

### **Better value insurance**

Our premiums offer real value for money. Other insurers often cut essential cover from their policies in order to offer attractive premiums, but if they tried to match our level of cover, the price would simply not compare.

### **Can your insurer say the same?**

Enclosed are a couple of postcards to prove that choosing the right insurer is not a matter of luck. Should your current insurer fail to match the level of cover provided by Hiscox, simply get a quote by calling **0845 365 1286**, or visit **hiscox.co.uk/mail** quoting reference **PD203**. If, however, your renewal date is still some time away, please keep the attached card as a useful reminder to get a quote from Hiscox.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Kevin Kerridge, Director

Hiscox Insurance Company Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority.  
Any reference to other insurers is based on a typical level of cover.



**HISCOX**  
HOME INSURANCE  
extraordinary cover

Perhaps we'll find out why in a minute...listen to this opening para...

*"Some people think that lizards are a bad sign while others credit them with healing powers. Whatever you believe, choosing the right insurance is not a matter of luck"*

WHAT?

What language is that?

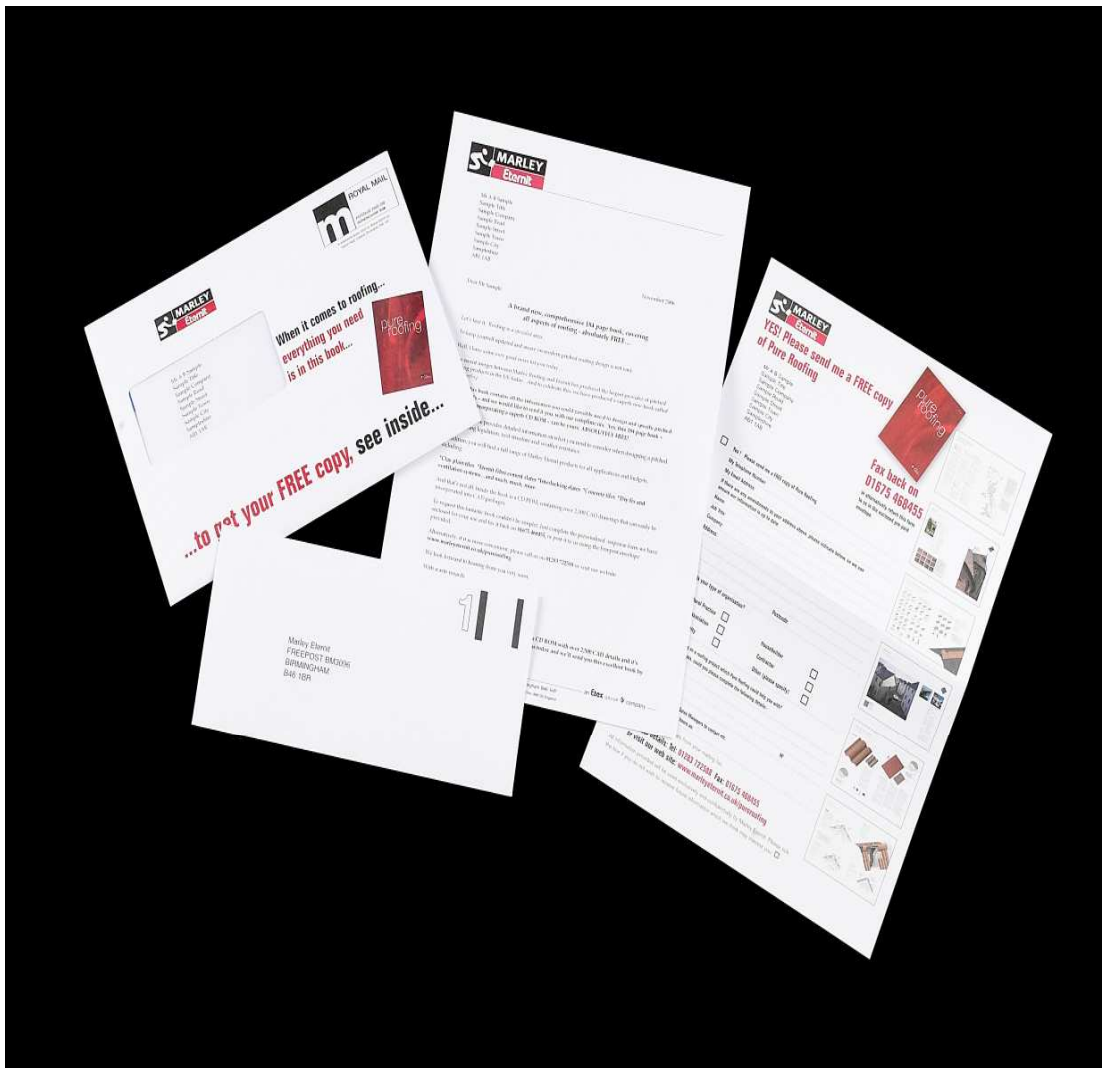
What are those two lines trying to say?

Who wrote this anyway - the window cleaner?

What about the damn lizard? Why is it there in the first place?

Someone please give me strength....

On the other hand, here's how it should be done.



Here's the letter...



Mr A B Sample  
Sample Title  
Sample Company  
Sample Street  
Sample Town  
Sample City  
Sampleshire  
ABI 1AB

November 2006

Dear Mr Sample

**A brand new, comprehensive 184 page manual, covering  
all aspects of roofing - absolutely FREE...**

Let's face it. Roofing is a *specialist* area.

To keep yourself updated and aware on modern pitched roofing design is not easy.

Well, I have some very good news for you today...

The recent merger between Marley Roofing and Eternit has produced the largest provider of pitched roofing products in the UK today. And to celebrate this, we have produced a superb new book called *Pure Roofing*.

**This book contains all the information you could possibly need to design and specify pitched roofs - and we would like to send it you, with our compliments. Yes, this 184 page book - also incorporating a superb CD ROM - can be yours, ABSOLUTELY FREE!**

This unique book provides detailed information on what you need to consider when designing a pitched roof, including legislation, roof structure and weather resistance.

In addition, you will find a full range of Marley Eternit products for all applications and budgets, including:

**\*Clay plain tiles \*Eternit fibre cement slates \*Interlocking slates \*Concrete tiles \*Dry fix and ventilation systems...and much, much, more...**

And that's not all. Inside the book is a CD ROM, containing over 2,500 CAD drawings that can easily be incorporated into CAD packages.

To request this fantastic book couldn't be simpler. Just complete the personalised response form we have enclosed for your use and fax it back on **01675 468455**, or post it to us using the Freepost envelope provided.

Alternatively, if it is more convenient, please call us on **01283 722588** or visit our website [www.marleyeternit.co.uk/purerroofing](http://www.marleyeternit.co.uk/purerroofing)

We look forward to hearing from you very soon.

With warm regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Hanlon'.

Sarah Hanlon  
Product Manager

**P.S. Don't forget! This 184 page book also contains a CD ROM with over 2,500 CAD details and it's yours ABSOLUTELY FREE. So don't delay, contact us today and we'll send you this excellent book by return post.**

This stunning example proves that sometimes a winning pack doesn't have to be all-singing and all-dancing.

It just has to *push* all the *right* buttons.



This did. In spades.

50% response rate. Yes, 50%. Unheard of these days. But this little gem achieved it.

What's more pleasing to me, is that we created it...

So, on that happy note, I'll take my leave...

I'll be back next month and concentrating on envelopes, as this subject has been requested by many of you over the last year or so.

See you all in June...

Don't forget, all my other articles are available for enjoyment and FREE download at:  
[www.andyowen.co.uk/articles.html](http://www.andyowen.co.uk/articles.html)

Keep the faith...

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy', with a small dot at the end.

#### **About the Author**

**Andy Owen is Managing Director of Andy Owen & Associates, a leading International direct marketing agency, specialising in all aspects of contemporary direct marketing. The company has offices in UK, Middle East, Romania & Russia, with Associate Offices in The USA.**

The company's corporate website is [www.andyowen.co.uk](http://www.andyowen.co.uk) The specialist copy division has its own site at [www.copywritingthatsells.com](http://www.copywritingthatsells.com)

As well as his International speaking engagements, Andy runs in-house copywriting and direct marketing sessions and workshops for companies and organisations all over the world. If you feel your company could benefit from one of these, please contact Andy for details.

To see Andy 'live' please visit [www.andyowen.co.uk/speaker-presenter.html](http://www.andyowen.co.uk/speaker-presenter.html) for future events and gigs.

If you would like further information on any aspect of direct or strategic marketing, or copywriting for direct response, please contact Andy direct at [andyowen@aol.com](mailto:andyowen@aol.com)

Andy's DVD on Copywriting called "*How To Write Copy That Really Sells.*" is now available to purchase online. To find out more and see excerpts from the DVD, visit <http://www.andyowen.co.uk/buy-online.html>