



A Hit for Carrots and a Miss for the HVAC Guy

IN THE GROCERY STORE AT 5:30 IN THE MORNING, I WASN'T PAYING A LOT OF ATTENTION SO I DIDN'T NOTICE UNTIL LATER HOW CLEVER THE PACKAGING WAS ON A BAG OF CARROTS. SOMETIMES, THOUGH, AD WRITERS CAN BE A BIT TOO CLEVER AND COST THE CLIENT SOME BUSINESS.

Eat 'em like junk food the package screamed (even getting the apostrophe in "em" right). Then I noticed the rabbit on the package and the rest of the words.

- **Here's the giant movie logo.** An arrow points to the HOP logo. I'm told that HOP is a movie for kids.
- **Check out our cross promotion.** Where? Maybe I should check this out online.
- **Paid celebrity endorsement.** Apparently this refers to the rabbit with sunglasses on his forehead and a carrot in his mouth.

Huh? This is a bag of carrots. What's a movie logo doing here? And why is the advertisement calling attention to itself?

It Works on Two Levels

PARENTS, WHO WILL PROBABLY BE IN THE STORE AT SOME TIME OTHER THAN 5:30 IN THE MORNING AND MIGHT BE PAYING MORE ATTENTION THAN I WAS AT THE TIME, WILL POSSIBLY FIND THE RECURSIVENESS OF THE PACKAGING AMUSING.

Consider the ancient cartoon program *Rocky and Bullwinkle* (later *The Bullwinkle Show*) in which the characters frequently made references to things that the supposed target audience (children) wouldn't understand. Parents thought the show was funny and, at a time when the average house had just one television, preventing the grown ups from changing the channel was an important consideration.



Although getting a smile from the parent is a good thing, it's of less importance than appealing to children and this package certainly does that.

It's bright. It's colorful. It has cartoon characters. But instead of being used to sell fast-food hamburgers or candy bars, these techniques are being employed in an effort to convince kids that carrots are enjoyable.

Carrots are nutritious and they have a relatively mild taste. They're a vegetable that children will eat

if only they can be convinced to give them a try. I think they're on to something here!

Are We Crazy?

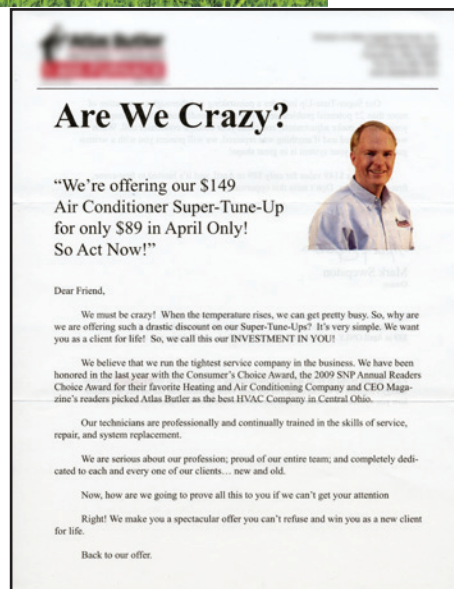
THAT'S THE GIGANTIC HEADLINE ON A DIRECT-RESPONSE LETTER THAT LANDED IN MY MAILBOX. A FEW SECONDS LATER, IT WAS IN THE TRASH.

I have to admit that the guy who's pictured on the letter doesn't look crazy but he tells me that he is

because of the offer he's making.

If it's a crazy offer, maybe the company will lose so much money on it that they'll go out of business and won't be around when something breaks in August.

Realistically I know that the offer isn't crazy. The \$90 tune-up is primarily an inspection of "25 potential problem areas", minor adjustments, and cleaning of the condenser (the big thing that's outside).



And in a lot of cases, the inspection will find systems that legitimately need a lot more work to be prepared for the summer cooling season. Some will even need to be replaced with entirely new systems. When somebody replaces the AC unit, there's a good chance that they'll replace the heating system, too.

So an offer than allows the company to more or less break even on a basic service call will more than pay off in additional work for those systems that need it and in repeat business from people who are pleased by the service the company provides.

In fact, the rest of the letter pretty much says just that.

It's just too bad that the writer told me he's crazy (and in approximately 60-point type!) because I avoid doing business with crazy people. [Ω](#)

Apple Invulnerable?

APPLE FANS SAY APPLE PRODUCTS ARE IMPERVIOUS TO VIRUSES AND MALWARE. REALLY?

Apple has encouraged that point of view. It never made any sense because all computers are vulnerable to certain kinds of attacks. This time Apple will find it hard to deny the problem because the bad guys used social engineering to run their scam.

Advertisements for *Mac Defender* started showing up earlier this month. *Mac Defender* would defeat viruses and malware, the ads said. The catch? *Mac Defender* is malware.

And on the heels of *Mac Defender* comes *Mac Guard*. *Mac Defender* required the hapless Mac owner to make several mistakes. *Mac Guard* requires only one.

So now Mac users may have to become familiar with BleepingComputer.com, a site that has helped many Windows users eliminate malware from their computers. It now has instructions for those who have fallen victim to *Mac Defender* and *Mac Guard*. [Ω](#)

Driving Traffic to Your Website (Part 4)

THIS IS THE LAST IN A SERIES OF ARTICLES ABOUT SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO). IT'S NOT FOR WANT OF MATERIAL BECAUSE SEO IS AN ENORMOUS TOPIC THAT IS CONSTANTLY CHANGING. ALTHOUGH HAVING A BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF SEO IS GOOD, TRYING TO PERFORM SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION FOR YOUR OWN WEBSITE PROBABLY IS AS ADVISABLE AS ASSEMBLING YOUR OWN AUTOMOBILE FROM PARTS THAT YOU BUY FROM AN AUTO PARTS STORE.

If you insist on providing your own SEO, I recommend *Search Engine Optimization for Dummies* by Peter Kent. Kent is a well known SEO expert and the For Dummies series of books routinely makes complex topics understandable.

My final word on SEO addresses the perplexing topic of page rank. You can easily find the page rank of pages on your site but, by itself, page rank is meaningless. As soon as Google finds a page on your site, it will have a page rank (or as Google styles it, "PageRank").

Yes, each page. Your site doesn't have a page rank. Only pages have page rank. The more pages your site has, the more entries Google will have in its page rank database. More page-ranked pages increase your site's value in Google's estimation. Because of this, some people mistakenly duplicate information in an effort to turn 10 pages into 100 or 100 pages into 1000. Don't!

If your site already thousands of pages of solid information, great! If not, attempting to finesse the existing pages to appear larger is an exercise in futility.

A much more productive way to improve your site's visibility (both to Google and the world at large) is to obtain links from other sites that have highly ranked pages. When content on your site might be of interest to those who visit sites that

are related to your line of business, let the other site's administrators know about it.

Before you reach out to the other site, make sure that the information you're offering is something that will be useful. Hint: An advertisement about your product or service is not useful.

One important fact to keep in mind is this: Google and the other search engines are constantly refining their systems and they do this without telling anyone what the rules were, are, or will be. That's why it's so important to depend on industry experts such as Kent who research the search engines.

Page rank is important, links are important, content is important, key words are important, titles are important, captions are important. So you may wonder if anything is unimportant and the answer would seem to be *no*.

Some of these may be more or less important for your individual site but nothing is truly unimportant. [Ω](#)



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