

Windmills were invented by Flemish painters as a way of filling in the background.

I was recently invited to speak at the Toppled Bollard (home to the East Midlands marketing intelligentsia) on the subject of raising response rates in direct mail.

“Take windmills,” I told my audience. “They were invented by Flemish painters to fill in the background. Then, before you know what’s happening, country landowners start building the objects they had seen in the paintings just to make their villages look nice.

“Much the same can be said of Jeffrey Archer and Tim Henman - fictional characters each, who were turned into real-life people by enthusiasts of their art.

“When writing an email or a sales letter attention has to be grabbed. But this is not done by shouting out your details and your product name. Like the Flemish master, you must take the visitor on a stroll away from the foreground and thus enhance interest and enthusiasm through being slightly more cautious and reserved. Shouting doesn’t sell anything anymore.

“The stroll might invoke the image of a lasagne the size of five football pitches which can be used to illuminate a 50w bulb for a week – or it might talk on serious matters about the best way to solve your payroll problems. Either way, you don’t mention your product or service until you have taken control of your reader’s mind and directed him or her into a new country.

“The only issue left is for the reader to invent the reality. What you partially sketch, the viewer fills in using the greatest selling tool of all: the imagination.

“Hence the product becomes the background and the message focuses on the reader or viewer’s wish list. You give the reader a new way of seeing the world. And if the reader looks around a corner and finds something more in your product than even you imagined, so be it. It is an approach totally in keeping with the standard theory of direct mail – which, if you would like to know more, is described on www.theory.bz It is by far the best way of raising response rates.”



Tony Attwood

PS: Call me, or email me, and give me a quick run down of what you do, and I’ll tell you exactly how I would increase your response rates and cut your marketing costs. No charge. No obligation. No windmills. 01536 399 000 or Tony@hamilton-house.com